

## EMI for International Class: How Do Students Perceive it?

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### ABSTRACT

*The internationalization of curriculum is an integration of the application of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in recent years. This research aims to investigate the implications of internationalizing the curriculum through the implementation of English as Medium of Instructions (EMI) in international classes for Bengkulu University law students. The participants in this research were 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semester Law students who had joined the International class program with a total of 28 participants. This research uses a qualitative methodology design with the instruments used, namely a questionnaire using a Likert scale and interviews. The results show that students have positive perceptions and tendencies towards the application of EMI in international classes. However, there are several weaknesses and challenges faced, such as competency in language use and English proficiency certification. The implication is that the International Class Program as a means of implementing EMI in the learning process must follow international curriculum standards that are appropriate by paying attention to many aspects, including the abilities of students, teachers, stakeholders and program management. Therefore, in conclusion, the application of EMI has a positive effect and is highly recommended for all types of scientific disciplines by paying attention to international standard curriculum implementation standards.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The international standard curriculum is a study that has become a trend with the implementation of English as the language of instruction in all academic subjects in educational institutions. English-medium instruction (EMI) is an unprecedented growing global educational provision initially imposed by policymakers with attempts to increase Internationalized Higher Education outlooks and International student mobility (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Dearden, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2021; Sahan et al., 2021). At university level, the curriculum adjustments need to involve the role of globalization which focuses on students' creative output to compete globally and have a positive competitive spirit. An "open social system with non-rigid interelement links, consistency of the elements themselves, and flexibility of normative control" could be used to characterize the global higher education system (Sá & Serpa, 2020). An internationally designed curriculum is characterized by the existence of international programs that support the implementation of internationalization of higher education. As mentioned by Sá & Serpa (2020), the internationalization of higher education is currently considered as one of its aims at a global level, shaping the very transformation of these institutions at the macro (policy design and decision making), meso (curricular structures and policies), and micro (teaching-learning process) levels. One form of implementation that supports the performance of internationalization is the opening of international class programs in certain faculties and study programs at university institutions. In

2008, Navarro and Edwards stated that internationalization needs to be accurately explained to instructors as a process of incorporating new ideas into existing course content rather than as a stand-alone addition. This is corroborated by Schuerholz-Lehr's (2007) assertion that strategic pedagogy ought to take precedence because faculty members' individual global experiences do not automatically translate to the classroom. So, this international program should collaborate with policy makers at university level, faculties and also study programs which will have an impact on teaching and teaching materials that are to student target goals in certain international programs.

Implementation of this internationalization-based curriculum requires collaboration between management and stakeholders. In order to support the integration of faculty experience into classroom practice, Roberts, et al (2016) recommended that faculty members stick together after the trip to develop curriculum, design learning opportunities for students, and incorporate international core teaching experiences. Faculty training in cultural diversity, learning style curriculum building, and instructional differentiation is necessary for internationalization (DeCuir, 2017). Comprehensive internationalization at least includes study abroad programs, guest speakers, international events which also consist of faculty development, globally focused research projects, and internationalized curriculum. This is consistent with West (2009) statement, which highlights the variety of internationalization initiatives in educational programs, including: a) global content integration, international research, and advisory boards; b) international experiences through conferences, study abroad, and guest speakers; and c) international student teaching placements. Therefore, it is very clear that the integration of the internationalization curriculum at the university level is strongly supported by scientists to be able to improve the quality of education through globally competitive human resources in all scientific disciplines.

One aspect that needs to be considered is global content. As explained, content is the keyword in this program. Course design that integrates global material with fundamental subjects of study is essential to building the framework for thorough internationalization (DeCuir, 2017). The application of global content with international standards also requires the use of a global language of instruction, one of which is the application of English as Medium of Instruction (EMI). Dearden (2015) defined EMI as the use of the English language for academic instruction in nations or regions where the majority of people do not speak English as their first language. The implications of EMI are the first step in increasing internationalization in higher education levels. In an effort to boost internationalized higher education prospects and international student mobility, officials first enforced EMI, an extraordinary expanding global education program (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Dearden, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2021; Sahan et al., 2021). EMI is implemented by stakeholders based on policies in international standard programs. In globalized higher education, the medium of instruction should be English if the educational aim is to prepare university students to have an international career. The primary focus of EMI is that international students are exposed to English learning while studying the content simultaneously. Then, without isolating language training, English language learners can advance both their content understanding and language abilities (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

The application of EMI is not limited to English language learning subjects, but is open to all various subjects of study. In Indonesia, the implementation of EMI in various fields of study is also supported by institutional policies that implement the International Undergraduate Program. In order to integrate international dimensions into academic activities and higher education professionalism by institutions from other countries that is, foreign universities involving state universities and domestic private universities the Ministry of Education continues to develop higher education management through the implementation of internationalization policies. Then, EMI's extensive coverage, which isn't restricted to any one topic area, may present a chance to start international classes and help educational institutions internationalize higher education.

There are several previous research results related to the implementation of English as Medium of Instruction at the Internationalization of Curriculum at Higher Education level. The first conducted by Urban, Navarro, and Borron (2017) found that the faculty programs for internationalization of the curriculum in higher education were often evaluated for short-and medium-term outcomes, but more long-term assessments were needed to determine impact which showed that perceived impacts varied considerably among participants and were highly dependent on students' characteristics and their current environment, as predicted using social cognitive theory. Al-Agtash and Khadra (2019) found that Internationalization promoted the idea of making the university a dynamic cross-boarder educational environment which was analysed mainly in the internationalization perspective. Gundsambuu (2019) revealed that Mongolian government was the key player in internationalization at the national level by making policies, taking initiatives, and encouraging national universities, however, the process of internationalization is much slower at private universities. Serpa (2020) found that through critical reflection, the goal was to advance knowledge about the internationalization of higher education curricula. It entails having the capacity to pay close attention to the diversity of cultures that

students will encounter in classrooms where the curriculum has become increasingly globalized. Dang (2023) found that EMI international students do not possess a holistic understanding of a certain language, but they could achieve holistic communication with all the linguistic resources they possess.

Therefore, based on the results of research related to English as a Medium of Instruction which has implications for international educational institution standards which include involvement between stakeholders, management, lecturers and students in designing and implementing curricula that have international standard learning programs, this research will be carried out to see the implications of implementing Internationalization of Curriculum in the use of English as Medium Instruction in the International class of Law students at Bengkulu University. To fulfil the objectives of this research, the research questions that need to be answered are:

1. What are students' perceptions regarding the application of EMI in international law study programs?
2. What are the implications of a curriculum with international program standards through the application of EMI to international classes of law students?

## 2. METHOD

This research used qualitative descriptive to look at perceptions and implications regarding the implementation of EMI in the international program standard curriculum carried out in international classes of law students at Bengkulu University. This research was conducted at the Faculty of Law on students taking international classes and stakeholders in implementing the international program at Bengkulu University. The participants were the students in semester 2 and semester 4 of the law study program with the total 28 students who are taking international classes in the implementation of the international class program related to the implementation of internationalization of curriculum based on the use of English as Medium of Instruction. The instruments used were in the form of questionnaires and interview. In this study, the questionnaires used likert scale, which was scored 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral/Uncertain, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) with the total 20 statements. The survey was made from previous studies on International students' content knowledge with 6 items, English proficiency with 9 items, course satisfaction with EMI classes with 5 items in Chung and Choi (2022) and were adjusted to the research needs. Questionnaire data was collected via Google form distributed to respondents. Then, for the interview instrument, the questions were adapted from Ghorbani (2020) and adjusted to the research needs. The data results were then analyzed using simple calculations through excel percentages.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

The results of the research data are explained in the form of data table. The data explains students' perceptions of the implementation of English as a Medium of Instructions (EMI) in the International law study program. The data table is divided into 3 indicators, namely on aspect of content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, and satisfaction with EMI classes.

**Table 1.** Aspects of Content Knowledge about EMI

No	Statements	St.dev	Mean	Interpretation	Percentage (%)
1	I can understand the contents of the EMI curriculum	0.82	3.61	High	72,8
2	I can understand the textbooks and PPT slides written in English	0.72	3.89	High	79,2
3	I can understand and remember the specific contents in English	0.82	3.61	High	74,3
4	I think that that EMI lecturers deepen my knowledge of the field of study	0.68	3.54	High	73,6
5	I think that EMI class helped me to improve my content knowledge	0.80	4.00	High	83,6
6	I can learn a lot of content knowledge through EMI class	0.78	4.04	High	85
<b>Average</b>					<b>78,08</b>

Based on the data in the Table 1, it can be seen that the tendency of students to use EMI to improve their ability to understand the context of knowledge in specific scientific disciplines in English tends to be positive with a high indication with a scale range of 3.40-4.19 with a total percentage of 78.8%.

**Table 2.** Aspects of English Proficiency and Communication Skills

No	Statements	Stdev	Mean	Interpretation	Percentage (%)
1	I can refer to major terms in English	0.78	3.43	High	69,3
2	I can identify critical keywords in the PPT slides or textbooks written in English	0.87	3.50	High	71.4
3	I think the EMI class helped me to improve my English proficiency	0.79	4.14	High	85
4	I can improve my ability to speak English through EMI class	0.68	4.04	High	83.6
5	I can improve my reading skills in English through EMI class	0.71	4.32	Very High	90
6	I can improve my ability to listen to English through EMI class	0.75	4.29	Very High	90
7	I can improve my ability to write English through EMI class	0.78	3.96	High	84,3
8	I can improve my English vocabulary skills through EMI class	0.82	4.11	High	87.8
9	I can improve my knowledge of English in my major through EMI class	0.82	3.96	High	86
<b>Average</b>					<b>83,04</b>

Based on the data in Table 2, it can be seen that the EMI class in the International class encourages students to improve their skills and knowledge in English with a high positive tendency, namely very high (4.20-5.00) and high (3.40-4.19) indications with a total percentage of 83.04 %.

**Table 3.** Questionnaires Items on Aspect of Satisfaction with EMI classes

No	Statements	St.dev	Mean	Interpretation	Percentage (%)
1	I think the curriculum of EMI classes is effective	0.68	3.50	High	71
2	This EMI class increases my interest in my major field	0.78	3.57	High	73
3	My overall satisfaction with EMI classes	0.80	3.71	High	76,4
4	I am willing to retake EMI classes next time	0.71	3.68	High	76,4
5	I would like to actively recommend EMI classes to other students (to my classmates)	0.70	3.93	High	82,1
<b>Average</b>					<b>75,8</b>

Table 3. shows that students tend to be satisfied with learning based on the use of EMI with a high scale index (3.40-3.19) that students are excited, satisfied, and willing to take classes using EMI, as well as recommending the application of EMI in international classes with other students.

The results of the questionnaire data were deepened with an interview instrument to see the curriculum implications of implementing English as a Medium of Instructions (EMI) in international class programs undertaken by law students. The interview questions refer to further explanation regarding the categories of content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, and satisfaction with EMI class. The research results show positive student perceptions of the implications of using EMI in international classes.

*"Personally, I think that EMI program in International class is very good for young generation in Indonesia, especially in University of Bengkulu, because through this program, we as law students are possible to improve our English skills which are very important to our future and also our faculty make us potentially to join other International programs which our faculty have provided. Then it influences our capacity especially in terms of content knowledge."*

All participants who take part in international classes consider that the implementation of EMI is very important and encourages improvements in the quality of students' English knowledge and skills, as well as the opportunity to take part in various internationally competitive activities.

In terms of educational infrastructure, such as qualified lecturers, pedagogical guidelines, and educational resources are good although there are still limitations in the use of spoken English during the learning process.

*"I think, our lecturers are very good in English, but some of them also use in Indonesian, however mostly they teach us by using bilingual languages. For learning resources, it is very good rather than the regular one because there is limitation about the number of students, thus we can enjoy the infrastructure well, such air conditioner, the tables, monitor, and speaker. They are new for the new class program."*

All interviewees felt comfortable with the complete learning facilities provided and also the delivery of material using a mix of languages which made it easier for students to understand the material and also encouraged them to further enrich their language skills. However, the use of mixed languages is also influenced by general subject subjects that are not too closely related to law, so lecturers are more likely to use Indonesian. Meanwhile, for pedagogical guidelines there is still a gap regarding the delivery of Semester Learning Plans (RPS), and some lecturers immediately focus on more specific subjects.

*"This semester, there are not many things like that, because the subjects are general courses, such as religion, Indonesian, and citizenship education. But, last semester, it was more about law courses. Well, general subjects are one of the factors why some lecturers use full Indonesian."*

In terms of English proficiency and communication skills, students feel that there is improvisation in English language skills through the application of EMI in international classes, especially in the context of vocabulary.

*"As I mentioned before about vocabulary in legal termst, it is very helpful because previously when it was regular, we immediately translated it in Google Translate without knowing the terms, but in this class, we have several times made assignments using English and Indonesia, thus I was encouraged to look for the correct terms and use of vocabulary. In terms of content, we use English, so we also compare with other countries that use certain terms. There are differences in the use of several terms that need to be understood. So, we know, for example, what the terms of Constitutional Court in America, and so on."*

Most interviewees mentioned that there are different vocabulary requirements needed in a legal context, so that with the help of presentation of material using bilingual languages, students can cross check the terms used in law and broaden their horizons regarding these specific terms. This is also supported by the provision of additional TOEFL learning provided by the faculty.

*"We can get a TOEFL learning program in Colorado, and there are also pre-test and post-tests provided there. So, from learning there, the faculty monitors our English proficiency. At the beginning, I tested at campus, at UPT Bahasa, I got 480, then during the pre-test in Colorado, it was about 540 and during the post-test, it was 613."*

Regarding the existence of constraints on the use of EMI in international classes, namely related to the judgment of regular class friends towards international class students in the teaching context.

*"Firstly, there is a gap between regular and International class, such as judgment from other friends and it is quite disturbing. They underestimate us as International class students. This may be because the material is the same and some lecturers also use Indonesian or mix languages. So, it is like, I am less comfortable interacting."*

This judgment refers to the way of teaching and using EMI which has just been implemented in the new program, namely the international class. Then, there are also concerns about the selection process which is considered less stringent and selective.

*"I think the problem is, how they find students who want to join International class. At first, the selection stage for us was less strict, because it was only an interview. Perhaps the selection process will be tightened and given more attention."*

Regarding judgments, most of the interviewees considered that it is important for a clearer explanation to be conveyed by stakeholders regarding the vision and mission of opening this program so that there are no misconceptions and gaps between students, both regular and international classes.

*"Probably the lecturer explains to other students about the difference between regular and International class that this program is open to the public. In my opinion, the lecturer did not explain enough about the vision and mission of opening this class. In total, we have 8 regular classes and 1 International class. So, the courses we take are the same as regular classes, but the only difference is about the way of learning."*

In line with this, stakeholders are also more structured and selective in choosing the best to join the International class so that the main achievements can be achieved well. In terms of expectation and satisfaction with EMI through International class, many interviewees responded highly positively. Their expectation is that the application of EMI has the potential to improve English language skills and become a career opportunity to participate in international activities.

*"The hope is to be able to take part in International programs that are truly aimed at increasing our value, for instance International standard exchange programs. Maybe we can use English frequently just like we use Indonesian, both for us as students and also the lecturers."*

During the learning process, they are quite satisfied with the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction regarding the provision of infrastructure and also the quality of the materials and teaching.

*"As for satisfaction, I feel quite satisfied, because we are facilitated not only by infrastructure but also learning outside and funded by the faculty, such as learning in Colorado. Then, there are also relationships with lecturers, and we are better known by lecturers compared to regular classes about fifty students or more. Perhaps what needs to be improved is the frequency of using English."*

Besides, they also highly recommend that the implementation of an international-based curriculum through the application of EMI is very useful and needed.

*"I think yes, because the program provides many benefits, at least there must be International classes, because it also opens up opportunities for University collaboration with other International buddies, and for students, there is not just the potential for International class at the law faculty, but it also has the potential to be opened at other faculties."*

### 3.2 Discussion

Based on the results of research using questionnaire data, it appears that there is a positive perception of law students in international classes regarding the use of EMI in the aspects of content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, satisfaction with EMI classes. The results are consistent with other research showing that EMI courses may result in improved achievement and comprehension of the lecture materials (Chung and Choi, 2022). The existence of an international class program which has only been implemented in less than 5 years, followed by semester 2 and semester 4 in 2024 at the University of Bengkulu is a new breakthrough in achieving the mission of becoming a world class university by 2025. This policy allows for the application of EMI in the presentation of material. This significance supports the implementation program of EMI classes in the International class for law students as an initial breakthrough and model for other faculties. The results of the study have implications for students' positive perception of their improvised

United Kingdom language skills, both knowledge and skills, as well as the level of satisfaction with the facilities and learning systems used. This also has a positive impact on the TOEFL score obtained, related to the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. Rogier (2012) showed that participants using EMI for four years resulted in improving their four English-language skill areas, as evidenced by the IELTS exam. It can be seen from this positive implication, then clear instructional goals to develop students' language skills along with a solid support system for teachers and students throughout their educational experience are needed (Rogier, 2012). This is also supported by the results of research on the use of English as medium of instruction in African countries (Brock-Utne, 2010; Clegg & Simpson, 2016; Early & Norton, 2014; Kuchah, 2016; Milligan et al., 2016; Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015; Pearson, 2014; Trudell, 2016). The implementation of the curriculum also still uses bilingual languages, namely Indonesia and English. This is the same as the results of a study in the United Arab Emirates in which instruction was delivered in English and Arabic (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015).

The significance of the positive influence of the implementation of EMI is also well implemented in Nepal, as done by Sah and Li (2018) found that parents, students, and teachers regarded EMI as a privileged form of linguistic capital for developing advanced English skills, enhancing educational achievements and access to higher education, and increasing the chance of upward social and economic mobility. Paulsrud (2016) also revealed that EMI is offered for prestige, an international profile, marketing potential and personal interest. Therefore, this implication is in line with the research expectations, namely the positive impact and positive perception from students regarding the implementation of the international curriculum using EMI.

The implication is that EMI affects content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, and students' satisfaction on the use of EMI. In terms of content knowledge, EMI has a positive effect in improving and broadening knowledge and language skills, especially in understanding the specific content material and vocabulary required. Then, students also self-reported that EMI improved their English proficiency and communication skills, through learning activities that required them to communicate in English, work on assignments, and also additional learning hours in Colorado which were facilitated by the faculty to provide opportunities for students, especially in improving TOEFL score so that you have the opportunity to take part in various international standard conference or internship activities. It is also supported by foreign students, one of whom is from Brunei so that students are encouraged to explore each other and learn to communicate in foreign languages. Then, students also explicitly expressed that they were satisfied with this program and the application of EMI in learning, so they strongly recommended this application to every faculty at university level to open international standard programs. Prior research has also shown that students who took EMI classes reported feeling more satisfied with their education (Yeh, 2014).

However, in its implementation, there are still several limitations. It can be seen from the interview results that the use of English as the language of instruction for learning materials is still not dominant, so bilingual languages are still used, even full in Indonesian for several general subjects. This is the underlying factor as there is judgment from other students regarding the quality of international classes which are considered normal and the same as regular classes. It was accordance with the work of Chung and Choi (2022) that there is still a lack of understanding of English lectures due to limited English proficiency. So, it turns out that there are still some weaknesses in the implementation of EMI.

The implications of student perceptions regarding the use of English as a Medium of Instructions (EMI) can be the first step in breakthroughs in high-level education in international-based curriculum standards. The goal of using English as the medium of teaching in schools is to help the next generation of Indonesians become dependable, competitive, and capable of working together on a global scale. This is a consideration in the implementation of international-based education. This is consistent with the government's announcement of policy on international-oriented implementation education programs under UUSPN 20/2004 article 50 paragraph 3.

Then, the results also revealed that the implementation of EMI through the international class program also influences the applicable curriculum implementation structure. There is a curriculum internalization process in international-based program standards. In order to focus on the programming of higher education activities in the areas of teaching, research, and service, internationalization of higher education refers to a process that involves recruiting international students, collaborating or partnering with foreign universities, and opening branch campuses in various nations, as stated by Zayed (2020). This refers to the quality of teaching, student selection, skills of teaching staff, collaboration with foreign institutions which will have implications for learning outcomes in the teaching process, research or personal and professional benefits. Published works, research with students, and conference presentations are among the instrumental consequences of research, according to Niehaus and Williams (2016). Professional benefits of research might include increased reputation and professional networks. This is in line with the goals as self-reported by students that they are encouraged

to carry out research studies, exchange programs, and also become speakers at international conferences so that later all of these experiences can have an impact on personal benefits for career paths.

In addition, the findings showed that in implementing the internationalization curriculum, it is necessary to pay attention to several things, such as professional competence. Fakhruddinova et.al (2020) proposes the following basic types of professional competence: differentiation-psychological competence in the area of students' knowledge absorption abilities; autopsychological competence in the area of benefits and drawbacks of the teacher's activity and personality; socio-psychological competence in the area of students' knowledge and skill formation methods; and special competence in the field of the taught academic discipline. So, there will be an influence in a context of internationalization of the curriculum and in a logic of development of intercultural competence by the students which involves substantial changes in the role of teacher. A teacher's primary responsibility is to plan the learning process for their pupils, which is predicated on their proficiency in a foreign language and their ability to teach multiculturally. Thus, this competency aspect needs to be considered and prepared well so that it will have an impact on achieving the expected student learning outcomes.

Therefore, there is also the assessment aspect in an internationalized curriculum. The assessment of students' intercultural competence should take into account their personal growth as well as their acquisition of intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills, particularly with regard to their ability to communicate, negotiate, and solve problems in cross-cultural contexts. This is an adaptation of Ji (2020) regarding the key component of assessment in an internationalized curriculum in Sá & Serpa (2020). Therefore, the implementation of curriculum internationalization must take into account several factors, both institutional, psychological and pedagogical.

The overall data results conclude that there are positive and supportive student tendency towards the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) through the implementation of the International class program which influences the aspects of content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, and satisfaction with EMI class. This has implications for the implementation of internationalization of curriculum in higher education levels with several considerations, namely professional competence, language competence, and assessment. Therefore, judging from the perception and implications of its implementation, the implementation of an International-based curriculum must be supported to continue to be developed and implemented at the Higher Education level through the existence of an International standard program using English as a Medium of Instructions (EMI) during the learning and teaching process.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this research reveal the perceptions and implications of implementing EMI on the internationalization of the curriculum through international class programs. It can be concluded that students have positive perceptions and tendencies towards using EMI which has an impact on content knowledge, English proficiency and communication skills, and satisfaction of EMI class. This has implications for the internationalization of an international standard curriculum which requires several aspects such as professional competence, language competence and assessment which need to be paid attention to by institutional stakeholders and teaching staff. Then, this use can be a new breakthrough and is highly recommended to be applied at the higher education level for internationalization of the curriculum through international standard programs, one of which is through international classes.

Thus, pedagogically, it can be seen that the implications of the implementation of EMI have a positive impact on students to improve their knowledge and skills through adequate classroom situations and facilities, and high learning motivation oriented to learning in the scope of global topics. However, due to limited time and participants, it is expected that future research will be able to enlarge the study's purview on the perceptions of stakeholders and educators to examine the syllabus, RPS, as well as the assessments provided so that they can be adapted to the internationalization of the curriculum with international standards which can be started from a study of international class programs in several faculties at university level. The next research topic can explore students' abilities through tests and is not limited to specific faculties, and can be examined from the pedagogical aspect whether it is in accordance with the international-based curriculum with the use of English as the language of instruction.

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