

# Transitioning to L1 Instruction University: A Case Study of EMI Graduates in Indonesia

*by* Pritz Hutabarat

---

**Submission date:** 06-May-2026 04:34PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2953722048

**File name:** Transitioning\_to\_L1\_at\_ljelta\_Sinta\_2.pdf (316.08K)

**Word count:** 7703

**Character count:** 43352

## Transitioning to L1 Instruction University: A Case Study of EMI Graduates in Indonesia

Pritz Hutabarat

Maranatha Christian University, e-mail: pritz.hutabarat@lang.maranatha.edu

Received 11 December 2023 | Received in revised form 11 January 2024 | Accepted 01 February 2024

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

EMI, L1 instruction, language flexibility, linguistic capital

#### DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/v9i1.1606>

#### How to cite:

Hutabarat, Pritz, (2024). Transitioning to L1 Instruction University: A Case Study of EMI Graduates in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 9 (1), 73-87

### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has spread across the globe with the promise of equipping students with high English proficiency levels. While a plethora of research has been done to explore students' and teachers' readiness for EMI, very few have dealt with the reverse phenomenon, EMI graduates transferring from English to first-language (L1) medium instruction. Therefore, conducted as a case study of six EMI graduates, this research project seeks to understand how the participant adapted to L1 instruction at higher education. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal seven themes in the participants' experiences namely, developing critical thinking skills, reading skills and the love of literature, language flexibility, challenges in transitioning to L1 instructions, essay writing challenges, challenges in socializing, and mentoring and tutoring as a learning strategy. The study concludes that the participants had a positive experience transitioning from EMI to L1 instruction. They also value English as their linguistic capital and employ various strategies to make the transitioning process go smoothly. This study helps EMI teachers, parents, and policymaker to mitigate the transition process for students who are moving from one language of instruction to another. Such mitigation is necessary to reduce anxiety and improve student's readiness to study in the new linguistic environment.

### 1. Introduction

The implementation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in non-anglophone countries has attracted debates over the benefits and disadvantages of the programme. The supporters of EMI claim that proficiency in the English language is the main advantage of the programme (Almudibry, 2022; Lin & Lei, 2021; Pun & Onder-Ozdemir, 2023; Sah, 2022; Siegel, 2020), whereas the opponents concern with the effect it has on the student's first language (Aldawsari, 2022; Orfan, 2023) the challenges in implementing EMI (Hua, 2020),

and how EMI could promote further social division in society (Sah, 2022). In Indonesia, EMI schools hold prestigious status among parents as they are believed to be preparing their children for globalization and better career prospects (Zein et al., 2020).

The implementation of EMI varies across different contexts and goals (Richards & Pun, 2023); however, it is generally believed that EMI helps students to acquire English as a second language naturally because it is used in the learning process in the classroom as well as in social interactions between students outside their classroom. A substantial body of research has dealt with students and teacher's readiness to study in English (Aldawsari, 2022; Hua, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Lin & Lei, 2021b; Orfan, 2023) with a substantial portion being done in the higher education context, whereas minimal study has been done in primary to secondary education.

To date, there are no authoritative reports confirming the number of EMI schools in Indonesia. However, it is believed that the number of EMI schools is increasing every year. On the other hand, the number of universities offering EMI classes or English degrees is still very limited, making the transition from EMI school to L1 instruction higher education unavoidable to thousands of Indonesian students every year. How EMI graduates experience this transition process is hardly studied. Therefore, this study aims to understand the transition process of EMI high school graduates when they continue their studies at L1 University. Thus, three research questions are posited to guide this study, namely, how do the participants value their learning experience at an EMI school? What are the challenges that EMI graduates face during the transition process? How do the students adapt to their new linguistic environment?

## 2. Literature Review

EMI has achieved global recognition, exhibiting notable expansion in regions such as China and Japan (Galloway et al., 2020). Unfortunately, such development is not supported by sufficient research on the EMI and thus may be problematic in its policy and implementation (Galloway et al., 2020; Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Macaro et al., 2018; Sah, 2022). In the ELT field, the studies are dominated by the benefits of EMI (Al-Shboul, 2022; Orfan, 2023), student's strategies in adapting to EMI (Zhang & Wei, 2021; Zhou & Rose, 2021), school policy and practice (Evans & Morrison, 2017; Galloway et al., 2020; Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Sah, 2022), student supports (Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Lee et al., 2021), teacher's support (Dang et al., 2023), and social and cultural aspects of EMI (Aldawsari, 2022; Al-Shboul, 2022; Galloway et al., 2020; Hutabarat, 2023a; Sah, 2022).

### 2.1 Benefits of EMI

The first aspect of EMI has to be related to its benefits, namely developing a high proficiency in English (Almudibry, 2022; Al-Shboul, 2022; Hutabarat, 2023b; Karakaş, 2015; Macaro & Akincioglu, 2018; Orfan, 2023) and intercultural understanding (Huang & Fang, 2023). In Huang & Fang's (2023) study, they investigated six EMI teachers in China to understand their perspective on the teaching of intercultural understanding at EMI schools. The results showed that while teachers with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics did not see the need to include cultural instruction in their EMI classes, those with backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences had a flexible and dynamic understanding of culture. Five areas of cultural instruction were found through data analysis

in the classroom: contrast, authentic material, group work, codeswitching, and guided discussion of culture. In terms of developing students' English level of proficiency, investigating 85 Saudi students from non-English degree programs in Saudi Arabia, Almodibry (2022) claimed that the participants attributed the improvements they made in their English ability to the exposure they had in EMI courses. The participants claimed that they had ample opportunities to use their English in meaningful ways such as through lectures and completing assignments.

## 2.2 Interplay between English and L1

Another angle to see the EMI phenomenon is by looking at the interplay between English as an international language and a student's first language. In a study involving 20 lecturers and 80 students in a university in Saudi Arabia, both teachers and students reached a consensus that students exhibited a preference for utilizing Arabic as a means of enhancing their comprehension of the subject matter while transitioning to Arabic in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) lessons (Aldawsari, 2022). In the study, the participants also reached a consensus regarding the impact of English language usage in education on both their linguistic and cultural aspects. A significant result arising from this study is that code-switching or translanguaging may serve as a viable instructional approach, ensuring students' comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. In Al-Shboul's (2022) study, the participants' recognition of the status of the English language significantly influences the development of favorable attitudes towards English, notwithstanding potential challenges encountered while utilizing English as a medium of teaching. Investigating 14 Arabic-speaking students in Jordan, Al-Shboul (2022) discovered that positive attitudes can be supported by many resources, which can be categorized as either sociocultural or educational in nature. This finding provides a rationale for the respondents' favorable sentiments towards both Arabic and English languages. Put simply, harboring positive opinions about Arabic does not have a detrimental impact on individuals' attitudes towards English, and vice versa.

In a Chinese context, Evan and Morrison (2017) compared two modes of instruction, in Chinese and English, for grade 10 to 12 students in China. The results suggest that students getting ready for English-focused exams in Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) schools receive instruction primarily in Cantonese or a combination of English and Cantonese. In contrast, students in EMI schools are predominantly taught in English. Graduates of CMI schools demonstrated reduced levels of self-assurance in their English proficiency, attained lower examination scores, and experienced greater difficulty adapting to university-level education compared to their counterparts from EMI schools. These findings underscore the disadvantages students assigned to CMI schools face based on their primary school achievements.

A review of ELI policy in K12 schools in Nepal, India, and Pakistan shows that EMI is ideologically perceived as a means of acquiring linguistic capital often believed in providing access to the global economy and, therefore, a liberating tool for socioeconomically minoritized groups (Sah, 2022). Furthermore, such ideology has oriented the concerned bodies to position EMI within the framework of Mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in South Asian countries, creating the discourse of inequality and injustice for different social groups. The article continues the argument that the language policies, which are being developed/practiced in the lure of economic globalization, ignoring the local

realities, become a source of marginalization along the lines of class, ethnicity, gender, and region.

### 2.3 Strategies in Implementing EMI Programmes

Another aspect of the study deals with how students adapt to the English environment at EMI schools. Lee et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of supporting the students in adapting to the EMI learning environment. The teachers at EMI schools need to be aware of the psychological challenge the students may have in learning a subject in a foreign or second language. In line with this, Hua (2020) warned that students face language proficiency, engagement, and comprehension challenges in EMI courses. Hua (2020) further suggests that adapting teaching approaches, providing an adaptation period, and offering more support and attention to less proficient learners could improve the EMI learning experience.

In addition, Zhou and Rose (2021) argued that students employed a comprehensive self-regulatory process of learning to adapt to the shift toward attending EMI classes. Gathering the data from 412 students in China, they stated that this process involved a strong connection between the participant's listening experience and the utilization of techniques during class, as well as their learning outcomes both before and following the class. The findings underscored the significance of preview activities in enhancing listening comprehension. The researchers also focused on the influence of self-efficacy and baseline performance in EMI listening. These findings significantly affect language instruction in preparation programs during the transitional phase.

From the teacher's perspective, those who teach at EMI frequently encounter situations where they lack sufficient preparation and support for their newly assumed responsibilities (Dang et al., 2023). Furthermore, the study shows that teachers encounter numerous obstacles when teaching with English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). The analysis uncovers discrepancies between teachers' difficulties and the available formal professional learning opportunities. Furthermore, this underscores the need of informal and continuous professional learning (PL) as well as the agency of teachers in orchestrating their learning.

### 2.4 Academic Achievement in EMI

The fourth aspect of EMI relates to the assessment process. Lin and Lei (2021b) investigated 205 university students in a university in China comparing a class taught in English and in Chinese. The findings indicate that there were no statistically significant disparities were seen in any of the assessment components, including the overall score, between the classes conducted in English and those conducted in Chinese. In connection to the correlation between language competency and academic achievements, it was observed that the English proficiency of students taught in English had a modest yet noteworthy impact on their academic success. Furthermore, it was found that the students' grade point average (GPA) had a higher level of predictability in relation to their academic achievements compared to their scores on the College English Test Band 4 (CET 4). The results of this study indicate that the impact of the language barrier on academic achievements can be reduced and potentially eliminated with the use of appropriate language assistance strategies and excellent academic skills.

In contrast, a study in Korea involving 524 students at three universities in Korea claimed that the students felt that EMI hinders their academic achievement. The participants believed that

L1 should be incorporated in their learning process to help them better understand the lessons (Kim et al., 2017).

### **2.5 EMI and English Language Acquisition**

Finally, a comprehensive review of 83 studies about EMI at higher education concludes that it is evident that significant worries are held by key stakeholders in relation to the introduction and execution of EMI, notwithstanding occasional acknowledgment of its unavoidable nature (Macaro et al., 2018). Furthermore, the study inferred from the current body of research that there is a lack of sufficient data to definitively claim that English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has a positive impact on language acquisition. Similarly, it cannot be conclusively stated that EMI has a definite negative effect on subject learning. Insufficient research has been conducted to establish the efficacy of classroom speech in promoting favorable outcomes. Macaro et al. (2018) contend that this inadequacy might be attributed, in part, to methodological issues in research at both the micro and macro levels. This is in line with Galloway et al. (2020) study regarding the policy and practice of EMI at higher education institutions in Japan and China. They argue that to enhance the efficacy of the EMI policy, further investigation is necessary, encompassing the entire university community and longitudinal inquiries into the pedagogical efficiency of English-medium instruction in higher education.

24

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study was conducted as a case study of six EMI graduates. The case study was chosen for this study due to its ability to investigate a phenomenon within its real setting without manipulating of the participants or contexts (Yin, 2014).

### **3.2 Participants**

The study employed purposive sampling where the participants were chosen based on their experiences learning at an EMI school and that they are learning at an L1-medium of instruction university. Consequently, six graduates from an EMI school in Bandung, Indonesia were chosen to participate in the study. Moreover, the study also covers two contexts of universities in Indonesia; public and private. Thus, three participants are studying at private universities and 3 students are studying at public universities.

### **3.3 Instruments**

The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were done in Indonesian and English, thus whenever necessary they were translated into Indonesian before being analyzed qualitatively. The interview questions were developed according to the research questions and had been tried out with two university students. A consent letter and a summary of the research project were given to the participants to which they gave the consent to participate in the study. The researcher made appointments for each individual participant and let the participants decide the time and place of the interview. Each participant was interviewed once. The interviews lasted between 15 to 40 minutes although there were times during the interviews the conversation between the researcher and the participants were not relevant to the research questions. The researcher treated the

interview as a conversation thus follow the lead from the participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), comprising six steps. First, the interviews were transcribed. The interviews were transcribed in Indonesian and then translated into English. The second is coding. Initially, the transcriptions were read three or four times to enable the researcher to get the gist and nuance of the responses. After that, the transcription is broken down into sentences, and the code is given at sentence level. By employing this approach, one can prevent the isolation of a sentence from its broader context or explanation, which is frequently provided in the subsequent two or three sentences. At this stage, it was observed that multiple sentences can be combined into a single node, represented by a single code.

Conversely, a single sentence can be associated with multiple codes, indicating the presence of multiple nodes referencing that particular sentence. The nodes were constructed incrementally as the transcription of each participant's data was coded. Third, after coding all transcriptions, the process of merging comparable nodes was undertaken, assigning a new node for the merged entities. Fourth, they were merging nodes to form themes by organizing the level 2 nodes that support such topics. Fifth, the themes were backtracked to ensure that relevant evidence supported each theme. Finally, six themes were finalized to be the findings of the study.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Critical Thinking Skills

All participants showed a positive attitude when reflecting on their learning experience at an EMI school. The participants found it relatively easy to think creatively and critically. One participant, Mark, stated, "I was told to think creatively and critically, so in my college, I find it easy or not a problem to think critically." Another participant, Jason, said he studied at an L1 instruction school before joining the EMI school. Jason said he struggled a lot when he first started learning at EMI school, especially in Bible class. He said,

"... you know at normal school (L1) we just memorize the names and stuff like that. But at XYZ school we have to analyse stuff, you know not just copy and paste stuff."

From the scripts, the participants value their learning experience at their school because it helped develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking can be defined as a cognitive process that involves the disciplined and proficient application of conceptualization, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This process is utilized to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions based on information obtained through observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, and communication (The Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2023). According to Watanabe-Crockett (2018), critical thinking encompasses more than just clarity and rationality in thought; it also involves the capacity to think autonomously. In alternative terms, throughout the procedure, in critical thinking, ideas must be subjected to rationality, thorough contemplation, and personal evaluation before disseminating them to others.

#### 4.2 Reading and Love for Literature

Exposure to Indonesian literature, such as "Bumi Manusia," a popular Indonesian novel, sparked a love for reading among some participants. This experience influenced their reading habits, with one participant, Cherry, stating, "Because of this experience, I love reading. So I have read Siti Nurbaya and Van der Wick". The EMI school where the participants went to seemed to encourage reading classic novels to their students. Participants in their Language Arts class shared that they read 'The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,' 'Killing the Mockingbird,' 'Pride and Prejudice,' 'Beowulf,' and other classic novels. Although the participants did not always enjoy the reading materials, they were required to complete the assignments and finish all the novels according to the timeline given by the teachers. This practice could develop perseverance in reading, which later helped them as they continued to higher education.

#### 4.3 Language Flexibility

The participants demonstrated language usage flexibility, using both Indonesian and English, with Indonesian as the preferred language of communication. They highlighted the advantages of maintaining fluency in both languages. For instance, Hans noted, "But sometimes when I meet my ex-schoolmates, I sometimes use English just to practice my English."

Hans stated that Indonesian language has become his dominant language ever since he graduated from high school. In addition, code-switching and code-mixing are common among the participants. They seemed to code-switch or code-mix (CS/CM) effortlessly and subconsciously. CS/CM has become their 'natural' way of communicating.

The participants demonstrated language flexibility, using both Indonesian and English, with a preference for Indonesian. They highlighted the advantages of maintaining fluency in both languages. For instance, one participant, Hans, noted, "But sometimes when I meet my ex-schoolmates, I sometimes use English just to practice my English.". Hans stated that the Indonesian language has become his dominant language ever since he graduated from high school. In addition, code-switching and code-mixing are common among the participants. They seemed to CS/CM effortlessly and subconsciously. CS/CM has become their 'natural' way of communicating.

#### 4.4 Language Transition Challenges

The participants faced challenges transitioning from learning English at their EMI school to Indonesian at university. One participant noted,

"Some problems that I encounter is that there were times when I prefer to use English terms because I did not know the Indonesian words. Because at school, we used to use English." (Ricky)

From the script, it is evident that Ricky believed that the utilization of English could occasionally be unsuitable. This is probably due to the fact that in Indonesia, English is still a mark or someone's social and economic status. Thus, using English in an Indonesian-medium class could be seen as showing off his high social and economic status. However, Ricky mentioned that such incidents were very few to mention. He said that most of the time he did not feel any difficulties interacting with other people and use Bahasa Indonesia. This shift

in language of instruction also impacted interactions with university lecturers, occasionally leading to awkward situations.

#### 4.5 Essay Writing Challenges

Writing essays in Indonesian posed difficulties for some participants due to their prior experience in English. They faced challenges with sentence structure and vocabulary in Indonesian essays. Hans mentioned, "What I find difficult is when I was asked to write an essay in Indonesian because we used to do it in English. So, things like sentence structure." Jason also shared a similar experience while working on his final thesis in Indonesian. In their school, grade 11 students must conduct simple research, write a report, and present their study to their parents, teachers, and other students. "It was a nerve-wracking experience!" (Jason). Jason mentioned that he worked hard to complete the essay and that his parents greatly helped him. Nonetheless, he felt satisfied with his performance, calling it "a great victory" (Jason).

#### 4.6 Challenges in Socializing with Students from Various Social and Cultural Backgrounds

The participants' experience of socializing at their university can be divided into two categories: those who study at a public or state university and those who study at a private university. Those who study at a private university do not face any problems building friendships and making new friends because they come from a relatively similar social, economic, and cultural background, which is Chinese-Indonesian, who are often middle class.

However, for those who study at a state university, Ricky, Cherry, and Hans testified that they struggle to make real and deep friendships on campus. Ricky said that the biggest problem is different religions and hobbies. Ricky said his friends were so severe and seemed always to study hard. He felt pressured to study as hard as his classmates, which he thought was too much.

Cherry also said that she sometimes felt too different from her classmates because there were very few Chinese-Indonesian students in her class. She does not want to only hang out with those students, but she finds it hard to make friends with the other Indonesian students. She said that, "I really want to have Indonesian, you know not 'chindo' [*chindo* is abbreviation of Chinese-Indonesian, Indonesian people who are Chinese descent], friends but it is so hard to, you know, tune in with them."

#### 4.7 Peer Learning and Tutoring

Participants noted helping peers with language-related challenges, particularly when dealing with scientific terms. Some participants assumed the role of tutors due to their EMI background, assisting others in English-related coursework. Cherry, in particular, really enjoys her role as a mentor to her cohorts; she said, "In the English class, I became like a tutor." (Cherry). Understandably, Cherry's classmates look up to her due to her high level of English. Hans also shared a similar experience at his university. Although he is taking the Chemical Engineering program and all subjects are delivered in Indonesian, his English has become a valuable linguistic capital as he can understand English journals much faster than his cohorts. He also joined a debating society on his campus, expanding his networking and thus becoming a member of more student clubs.

## 5. Discussion

This section will elaborate the answer to the research questions guiding the study, first, how do the participants perceive their experience learning at an EMI school? Second, what are the challenges that EMI school graduates face during the transition? And third, how do the students adapt to their new linguistic environment?

### 5.1 The Perceptions of EMI School Experiences

#### 5.1.1 Positive Attitude towards EMI

The first part of the response seems unrelated to the first research question; however, it is an essential aspect of the participant's transition process because their ability to communicate in English does not become a barrier to the transition process. Instead, it mediates the smooth transitional process. The participants in the study exhibited a positive attitude toward learning in an EMI environment. This aligns with the literature review, highlighting EMI's benefits, such as improved language proficiency and favorable attitudes towards English (Almudibry, 2022; Al-Shboul, 2022; Lee et al., 2021; Macaro & Akinçioğlu, 2018). Although Karakas (2015) warns English educators and policy makers to view the use of English in EMI setting critically as it could promote thus be perceived as championing the native speakers' versions of English over other variations of English. Additionally, content-focused lecturers and students are encouraged to reexamine their preconceived notions and modify their expectations and language practices to the realities of modern English, bearing in mind that their main goal is to complete academic tasks in English rather than demonstrate their proficiency in the language, frequently in comparison to native English benchmarks (Karakas, 2015). In contrast to this, all participants shared similar experiences towards EMI and felt that their experiences learning at EMI school helped them with critical thinking skills. They argued that because they had some native-speaker teachers teaching various subjects, they often challenged them to think outside the box. Thus, studying at EMI not only improved their English but also their mastery of subjects at school. The finding of this study also in opposition to Kim et. al (2017) study which states that the students demand the use of L1 in their learning process. The participants in the present study do not feel that EMI hinders their understanding of their lesson rather strengthen it through employing critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is influenced by social and cultural contexts in which students from Asian backgrounds may have different perspectives on what constitutes critical thinking skills than those from Western backgrounds (Gyenes, 2021). Therefore, how the native speakers teach or require the students to think and respond to questions may affect what EMI students perceive as critical thinking, which may differ from those who go to L1 instruction schools in Indonesia. The participants had a positive attitude towards EMI because they felt they did not lack L1 communication skills, which mitigated the transition to the L1-instruction process.

#### 5.1.2 EMI School Nurtures The Love of Reading And Literature

Exposure to Indonesian literature sparked a love for reading among some participants. This experience mirrors the idea that EMI can expose students to a wider range of literature and cultural experiences (Sah, 2022). The EMI school where the participants of this study went to required them to read classic Indonesian and western novels. During Language Art subject they were challenged to understand the context in which the story took place and to reflect it on the modern era or Christian worldview. One participant, Hans, stated that he enjoyed

learning a classical literary works. He said that it enhanced his knowledge of the western worldview. He further explained that because his school was a Christian school, the teachers would always compare the Western or Indonesian worldviews to Biblical teaching. From his engagement with novels and other literary works, Hans claimed to love reading and reflecting on his own values. This love of reading helped him with his study, and he developed proficient reading skills, especially reading English academic text, which helped him with his study at university.

Another participant, Cherry, is studying English literature. For her, her experience going to an EMI school is so beneficial in supporting what she was doing. She loved reading novels and other literary texts. Therefore, when she enrolled to her study program, she immediately foresaw her advantages in the English language compared to her cohorts. She said her English is far above her cohorts', and she has no difficulties studying at her university. She said that she was required to read a lot at her institution, and although some students were hesitant and to view it as a challenge, she found the task to be really interesting.

## **5.2 Challenges During The Transition Period**

### **5.2.1 Language Transition Challenges**

Although the participants stated that they enjoyed learning at EMI, one of them faced challenges when transitioning from EMI schools to using Indonesian as the medium of instruction at university. One participant, Tim said that,

"It was quite difficult at first but not that serious. I mean one of the lecturers was very funny and like to make jokes. And sometimes using Sundanese too. So, ya it was quite hard to follow his lessons."

This finding echoes Al-Shboul's (2022) study where the students prefer using English to their L1. Therefore, transitioning to L1 environment poses challenges to some of the participants. This transition challenge is consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the need for adaptation and support for students moving from EMI to a different language of instruction (Lee et al., 2021). In this study, Tim did not get any forms of support, although he managed to keep up with the lesson and did not feel that he missed anything substantial regarding the materials delivered by the lecturer. It was mainly trivial jokes that he did not understand and follow.

### **5.2.2 Essay Writing Challenges**

Previous studies (Aldawsari, 2022; Kim et al., 2017) have found that the majority of the students in their studies prefer to study in their L1. It seems these students struggled to understand the lessons due to their low level of English ability. However, as mentioned earlier, the findings of the present study offer the opposite perception in which the participants did not feel any difficulties in learning subjects in English. On the contrary, some participants encountered difficulties in writing essays in Indonesian due to their prior experience in English. This finding aligns with Hua's (2020) study, although in the reverse context, that language proficiency challenges are faced by students in EMI settings (Hua, 2020). In this study, Adi stated that,

"I did not know how to answer the questions. I felt like really stupid there. Because my friends can write long paragraph or essay easily but I could

not. If I compared my answers to my friend's answers, it is so obvious that they have better answers. I mean, mine is just one or two short sentences, but they can write long paragraph."

The script shows that Adi understood the questions but found it hard to elaborate his answers as much as he wanted. He associated the length of the answers with knowledge and linguistic ability.

### 5.3 Strategies to Adapt in The New Linguistic And Academic Environment

#### 5.3.1 Peer Learning and Tutoring

Participants assumed the role of tutors to help peers with language-related challenges, particularly in scientific terms. This aligns with the literature's emphasis on peer support and adaptation strategies for EMI students (Zhou & Rose, 2021). The participants mentioned that they got to know lots of students when they started their study at universities. They said that at their high school, they only had 40 classmates with whom they interacted with. However, at university they had the opportunity to make friends with significantly more students. This is because they interact with students from other study programs when attending various student clubs. Hans said, that he met students from all over Indonesia, which excites him because he can learn from his new friends.

Tim mentioned that his campus arranged mentoring sessions for new students to help them adjust to higher education routines. He values the mentoring sessions because he can share his problems with his seniors and they can give him advice. He often did his homework during the mentoring session, which has boosted his confidence and ability to cope with the assignments. He said he wanted to become a mentor because he wanted to help other new students, too. This is in line with Lin and Lei (Lin & Lei, 2021b) study in which the lecturer supported students' learning by employing various strategies. To some extent, the mentoring group is a positive effort to assist students who are struggling students who need extra help.

#### 5.3.2 English as a Linguistic Capital

The participants' use of English shows their awareness of English being a valuable capital. The English language holds significant relevance as a foreign language in Indonesia, as indicated by its exclusive status as the compulsory subject taught in secondary schools. Furthermore, the English language is extensively employed as a means of communication in global corporations, as seen by the inclusion of English proficiency requirements in job advertisements. In many instances, individuals seeking employment are typically mandated to furnish evidence of their proficiency in the English language by submitting standardized English language assessments such as the TOEFL or IELTS. Therefore, proficiency in the English language is considered a crucial factor for achieving economic prosperity (Kubota, 2011; Price, 2014). This finding echoes Almodibry's (2022) claim that EMI students see their English skills as a necessary requirement to their success. In fact, in his study, Almodibry (2022) shows that some of his participants had promotion almost instantly following the completion of their studies which were conducted in EMI setting.

### 5.3.4 Using Indonesian as The Dominant Language of Socializing

In general, the participants positive attitude towards EMI because they felt that they were not lacking in L1 communication skills which mitigate the transition to L1-instruction process. Furthermore, the participants predominantly used Indonesian at home and with friends, which reflects the common practice of using the native language for everyday communication. The participants said that even while studying at the EMI school, they constantly used Indonesian in their daily conversation. This is in line with the literature's emphasis on the importance of maintaining proficiency in the native language (Sah, 2022).

However, the participants also code-switched and code-mixed a lot in their conversations. Even during the interviews, they kept inserting English words in their responses. Jason said, "it is nicer to speak in Indonesian. But sometimes we just mix the language." Participants demonstrated language flexibility, using both Indonesian and English, with a preference for Indonesian. This flexibility is consistent with the literature's discussion of code-switching and translanguaging as viable approaches in EMI settings (Zhang & Wei, 2021)

This is also in line with Moradi & Chen's study (2022) involving 78 undergraduate students at a university in China. In their study Moradi & Chen (2022) concluded that the incidence of code-switching and code-mixing (CS/CM) is influenced by sociolinguistic and socio-psychological factors, as well as the linguistic characteristics of the lexical items, phrases, and sentences employed in social interactions. Additionally, the relative language ability of bilingual individuals in both languages has a role in determining the occurrence of CS/CM. The capacity to transition between languages within social settings necessitates more than just linguistic competence and expertise; it also demands an awareness of sociolinguistic and sociocultural nuances. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) or computer-mediated communication (CMC) is frequently employed as an instructional approach for acquiring proficiency in the English language.

In this study, the participants subconsciously switch from Indonesian to English and vice versa whenever the situations are suitable. However, they also said that they code-switched much less in public areas because they did not feel that it was the right place to use English. "But we do not use English when we are with other people who are not from our school. Or when we played with other people." (Tim).

## 6. Conclusion

After graduating from the EMI school, the participants continue their studies at an Indonesian university. During their graduate study, the participants did not encounter any noticeable barriers due to their competence in the Indonesian language. The participants claimed that they still developed the ability to communicate and follow lessons in Indonesian. Moreover, the participants feel that they are as good as their non-EMI classmates in using the Indonesian language in communication. Therefore, some conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, there was no noticeable transition process as they progressed in their education. The participants use the Indonesian language constantly at home and with their friends. In fact, the participants cruised smoothly into an L1 learning environment. This is to say that there is no evident which suggests that learning at an EMI school harms the student's ability to communicate in their L1. However, one noticeable problem was related to understanding some of the early lessons at university. It is as a result that the participants' use of English was

limited to the school context, and they switched to using more Indonesian as they grew up. Presumably, this can be attributed to their enhanced proficiency in the Indonesian language.

Secondly, the participants value their ability to think critically and commend their native-speaker teachers at EMI schools for challenging them to read classic novels and reflect on the worldviews embedded in those novels. Furthermore, the participants claimed to have developed a high level of reading skills as a result of learning Language Arts from primary to high school. Consecutively, the participants developed a high level of English proficiency, which became one of their linguistic capital, which they utilized to better understand some of their course materials written or delivered in English. Furthermore, their ability to understand English texts has made them become a point of reference within their cohorts. Finally, the participants sought help from their peers should they have problems with assignments or understanding the lectures.

Pedagogically, what can be learned from this study is how languages are used and developed through meaningful conversations and interactions. EMI schools are encouraged to embrace the use of students' L1 in their casual conversations as well as a means to understand some concepts or theories. Lastly, students' appreciation and utilization of their languages should be seen as an act of agency through which they develop certain linguistic identities.

This study was conducted as a small case study of six EMI graduates in Bandung, Indonesia. Therefore, the results of this study should not be generalized across all EMI schools and students in Bandung and Indonesia. More comprehensive studies are needed to better understand EMI and its impact of it on students' L1 skills in general and academic settings. Moreover, future studies should include schools from various demographic backgrounds to ensure a more holistic understanding of EMI in Indonesia.

#### References

- Aldawsari, M. (2022). Deciphering Students and Teachers' Perceptions Towards English as a Medium of Instruction: A Case Study of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2687–2694. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpsls.1212.27>
- Almudibry, K. (2022). Students' Attitudes towards Using English as A Medium of Instruction in Scientific Disciplines: Challenges And Solutions. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 17(8), 2760–2770. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i8.7522>
- Al-Shboul, O. K. (2022). The Students' Perceptions of Arabic and English as a Medium of Instruction in Jordan. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(7), 1441–1446. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17507/tpsls.1207.26>
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning The Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE Publications Inc.
- Dang, T. K. A., Bonar, G., & Yao, J. (2023). Professional Learning for Educators Teaching in English-Medium-Instruction in Higher Education: A Systematic Review. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(4), 840–858. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1863350>
- Evans, S., & Morrison, B. (2017). English-Medium Instruction in Hong Kong: Illuminating A Grey Area in School Policies and Classroom Practices. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 18(3), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2016.1270106>

- Galloway, N., & Ruegg, R. (2020). The Provision of Student Support on English Medium Instruction Programmes in Japan And China. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 45, 100846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100846>
- Galloway, N., Takuya, N., & Nerys, R. (2020). The 'Internationalisation', Or 'Englishisation', of Higher Education in East Asia. *Higher Education*, 80(3), 395–414. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00486-1>
- Hua, T.-L. (2020). Understanding the Learning Challenges of English-Medium Instruction Learners and Ways to Facilitate Their Learning: A Case Study of Taiwan Psychology Students' Perspectives. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 12(2), 321–340. <https://doi.org/10.5294/laclil.2019.12.2.6>
- Huang, W., & Fang, F. (2023). EMI Teachers' Perceptions And Practices Regarding Culture Teaching in Chinese Higher Education. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 36(2), 205–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2022.2115056>
- Hutabarat, P. (2023a). English Immersion Programme And Sense of Nationalism: A Case Study of A Senior High School in Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen Sosial Humaniora*, 5(2), 91–103.
- Hutabarat, P. (2023b). Investigating Student's Perception of Learning at an English Immersion School in Indonesia. *JlIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6(9), 6919–6928. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i9.2686>
- Karakaş, A. (2015). Orientations towards English among English-medium Instruction Students. *Englishes in Practice*, 2(1), 1–38. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eip-2015-0001>
- Kim, E. G., Kweon, S.-O., & Kim, J. (2017). Korean Engineering Students' Perceptions of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) And L1 Use in EMI Classes. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38(2), 130–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2016.1177061>
- Lee, Y.-J., Davis, R., & Li, Y. (2021). Chinese International Graduate Students' Perceptions of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Courses at a Korean University. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 18(3), 995–1002. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/chinese-international-graduate-students/docview/2586281207/se-2?accountid=50674>
- Lin, T., & Lei, J. (2021). English-Medium Instruction and Content Learning in Higher Education: Effects of Medium of Instruction, English Proficiency, and Academic Ability. *SAGE Open*, 11(4), 215824402110615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211061533>
- Macaro, E., & Akincioglu, M. (2018). Turkish University Students' Perceptions about English Medium Instruction: Exploring Year Group, Gender And University Type as Variables. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 39(3), 256–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1367398>
- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A Systematic Review of English Medium Instruction in Higher Education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350>
- Orfan, S. N. (2023). Lecturers' Perceptions of English Medium instruction in The Higher Education Sector of Afghanistan. *Issues in Educational Research*, 33(1), 247–265. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/lecturers-perceptions-english-medium-instruction/docview/2839828805/se-2?accountid=50674>
- Pun, J., & Onder-Ozdemir, N. (2023). Exploring Students' Perceptions in Sustainable Disciplinary Language Learning in an English-Medium Instruction University: A Case

- Study of Hong Kong Veterinary Medical Students. *Sustainability*, 15(2), 1279.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021279>
- Richards, J. C., & Pun, J. (2023). A Typology of English-Medium Instruction. *RELC Journal*, 54(1), 216–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220968584>
- Sah, P. K. (2022). English Medium Instruction in South Asia's Multilingual Schools: Unpacking The Dynamics of Ideological Orientations, Policy/practices, And Democratic Questions. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(2), 742–755. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1718591>
- Siegel, J. (2020). Comprehension in English Medium Instruction (EMI) lectures: On the impact of lecturer L2 English use. *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 10(1), 73–91. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2020-2005>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). Case Study Research: Design And Methods. In *Sage Publications* (5th ed., Vol. 26, Issue 5th). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0bo13e31822ddage>
- Zein, S., Sukyadi, D., Hamied, F. A., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2020). English Language Education in Indonesia: A Review of Research (2011–2019). *Language Teaching*, 53(4), 491–523. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000208>
- Zhang, Y., & Wei, R. (2021). Strategic Use of L1 in Chinese EMI Classrooms: A Translanguaging Perspective. In W. Tsou & W. Baker (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction Translanguaging Practices in Asia: Theories, Frameworks and Implementation in Higher Education*. Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3001-9>
- Zhou, S., & Rose, H. (2021). Self-regulated Listening of Students at Transition from High School to An English Medium Instruction (EMI) Transnational University in China. *System*, 103, 102644. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102644>

# Transitioning to L1 Instruction University: A Case Study of EMI Graduates in Indonesia

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

15%

SIMILARITY INDEX

9%

INTERNET SOURCES

12%

PUBLICATIONS

4%

STUDENT PAPERS

## PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Universitas Negeri Jakarta Student Paper	2%
2	<a href="http://www.researchgate.net">www.researchgate.net</a> Internet Source	2%
3	<a href="http://ebin.pub">ebin.pub</a> Internet Source	1%
4	Subhan Zein, Fuad Abdul Hamied. "The Routledge International Handbook of English Language Education in Indonesia", Routledge, 2025 Publication	<1%
5	<a href="http://www.tandfonline.com">www.tandfonline.com</a> Internet Source	<1%
6	Ben-Fred Ohia. "Linguistic Features of Code-Mixing and Code-Switching: The Case of Educated Ogba Bilinguals", European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences, 2023 Publication	<1%
7	Demir, Şeyma Merve. "Higher Education Content Lecturers' Attitudes Towards English Medium Instruction (EMI), Their Challenges and Coping Strategies in EMI Classes", TED University (Turkey) Publication	<1%
8	Wenhong Huang, Fan Fang. "EMI Teachers' perceptions and practices regarding culture	<1%

teaching in Chinese higher education",  
Language, Culture and Curriculum, 2022

Publication

---

9 "English Medium Instruction in Higher Education", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025 <1 %

Publication

---

10 Fatma Nurcan PINAR, GÜRBÜZ OCAK. "The mediating and moderating role of self-determined learning in the relationship between creative thinking and problem-solving skills among sixth-grade students", International Journal of Educational Research, 2026 <1 %

Publication

---

11 [lirias.kuleuven.be](http://lirias.kuleuven.be) <1 %

Internet Source

---

12 Areej Hathal Alotaibi, Ashwaq Abdullah AlJahlan, Ghadeer Fehaid AlHarbi, Talal Musaed Alghizzi. "The Impact of English as A Medium of Instruction in International Education on Arabic Language Preservation and Cultural Identity: Parents' Perspectives and Strategies", Ampersand, 2025 <1 %

Publication

---

13 Submitted to Liverpool John Moores University <1 %

Student Paper

---

14 [www.ijlter.org](http://www.ijlter.org) <1 %

Internet Source

---

15 [www.jiip.stkipyapisdompu.ac.id](http://www.jiip.stkipyapisdompu.ac.id) <1 %

Internet Source

---

16 [theses.hal.science](http://theses.hal.science) <1 %

Internet Source

---

17 "Re-envisioning English-Medium Instruction in K-12 Schools", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2025  
Publication <1 %

---

18 Ram Ashish Giri, Amol Padwad, Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir. "English as a Medium of Instruction in South Asia - Issues in Equity and Social Justice", Routledge, 2023  
Publication <1 %

---

19 Yuxuan Mu, Seongyong Lee, Hongsung Choe. "Factors influencing English as a lingua franca communication: A case of an international university in China", System, 2023  
Publication <1 %

---

20 Marta Guarda. "Student Perspectives on English-Medium Instruction - Insights from an Italian University", Routledge, 2021  
Publication <1 %

---

21 Submitted to Silpakorn University  
Student Paper <1 %

---

22 Viet Long Doan, Ba-Quang-Vinh Nguyen, Chi Cong Nguyen, Cuong Tien Nguyen. "Effect of time-variant rainfall on landslide susceptibility: A case study in Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam", Vietnam Journal of Earth Sciences, 2024  
Publication <1 %

---

23 digital-science.pubmedia.id  
Internet Source <1 %

---

24 mulinet11.li.mahidol.ac.th  
Internet Source <1 %

---

25 Ken Hyland, Paul Thompson. "The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes", Routledge, 2026  
<1 %

---

26	Submitted to University of Nottingham Student Paper	<1 %
27	www.sciencegate.app Internet Source	<1 %
28	Jennifer Jenkins, Will Baker, Martin Dewey. "The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca", Routledge, 2017 Publication	<1 %
29	Ram Ashish Giri, Laxman Gnawali. "The Handbook of English Language Education in Nepal - Policies, Programs, and Prospects", Routledge, 2025 Publication	<1 %
30	jyx.jyu.fi Internet Source	<1 %
31	learning-gate.com Internet Source	<1 %
32	opus.lib.uts.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %
33	publisher.unimas.my Internet Source	<1 %
34	Jun Lei, Wenqi Ye. "Exploring Chinese university students' motivation and engagement in English medium instruction: A latent profiling approach", System, 2025 Publication	<1 %
35	files01.core.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
36	tpls.academypublication.com Internet Source	<1 %
37	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	<1 %

<1 %

38

[www.ijeltal.org](http://www.ijeltal.org)

Internet Source

<1 %

39

[www.lib.eduhk.hk](http://www.lib.eduhk.hk)

Internet Source

<1 %

40

Colón-LaCroix, Katia. "Refocusing the Lens: A Grounded Theory of Success and Support for and by First-Generation College Students of Color.", University of St. Thomas (Minnesota)

Publication

<1 %

41

Kari Sahan, Agata Mikolajewska, Michael Budzenski, Nicola Galloway. "'Language is like a boat that carries content': Understanding students' and lecturers' perceptions on English Medium Instruction (EMI) teaching and support in Vietnam and Thailand.", System, 2026

Publication

<1 %

42

Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi. "The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Pedagogy of Persian", Routledge, 2020

Publication

<1 %

43

Williams, Leanay. "A Qualitative Case Study Examining Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Integrating Social-Emotional Learning in the Curriculum", National University

Publication

<1 %

44

[acikerisim.uludag.edu.tr](http://acikerisim.uludag.edu.tr)

Internet Source

<1 %

45

[arro.anglia.ac.uk](http://arro.anglia.ac.uk)

Internet Source

<1 %

[dokumen.pub](http://dokumen.pub)

46	Internet Source	<1 %
47	e-gagueira.com Internet Source	<1 %
48	iris.unito.it Internet Source	<1 %
49	ojs.unm.ac.id Internet Source	<1 %
50	pure.manchester.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
51	qjss.com.pk Internet Source	<1 %
52	www.frontiersin.org Internet Source	<1 %
53	"English Medium Instruction in Higher Education in Asia-Pacific", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2017 Publication	<1 %
54	Panagiotopoulou, Dorette. "The Delphic Oracle: The Tension Between Speech, Inscription, and Space", Open University (United Kingdom), 2024 Publication	<1 %
55	Bruna Di Sabato, Bronwen Hughes. "Multilingual Perspectives from Europe and Beyond on Language Policy and Practice", Routledge, 2021 Publication	<1 %
56	Kevin W. H. Tai, Yiran Vicky Zhao. "Success factors for English as a second language university students' attainment in academic English language proficiency: exploring the roles of secondary school medium-of-	<1 %

57

Shella Monica, Safnil Arsyad, Budi Waluyo.  
"English medium instruction in Islamic higher education: Challenges of Lecturer readiness in Indonesia", Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 2025

Publication

---

<1%

---

Exclude quotes Off

Exclude matches Off

Exclude bibliography On

# Transitioning to L1 Instruction University: A Case Study of EMI Graduates in Indonesia

---

## GRADEMARK REPORT

---

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

**/0**

---

PAGE 1

---

PAGE 2

---

PAGE 3

---

PAGE 4

---

PAGE 5

---

PAGE 6

---

PAGE 7

---

PAGE 8

---

PAGE 9

---

PAGE 10

---

PAGE 11

---

PAGE 12

---

PAGE 13

---

PAGE 14

---

PAGE 15

---