

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LECTURER TALK IN EMI CLASSROOMS: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO PARTICIPATION AND COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: This research focuses on English-Medium Instruction (EMI), an educational approach that is spreading widely and rapidly in higher education institutions throughout the world because it is regarded as a lynchpin of the internationalisation process. The main aim of the Element is to provide critical insights into EMI implementation and the results obtained from the impact of teaching and learning both content and language in a foreign language, translanguaging practices in English-medium lectures, and how assessment has hitherto been addressed.

This study was conducted at UHAMKA UNIVERSITY. The object of this study was 8 students talk during the classroom interaction in the teaching and learning process inside the classroom. The method of this study was a qualitative study. The writer used interviews and audio recordings as instruments of this study.

Keywords: *English-Medium Instruction, Approach, Qualitative*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education institutions across Indonesia has gained momentum in recent years as part of broader internationalization efforts and a strategy to enhance students' English proficiency. Particularly within English Education programs, EMI is expected to improve students' academic language skills and prepare them for global academic and professional environments. However, the effectiveness of EMI depends not only on curriculum design or language policy, but also on how lecturers communicate in the classroom. Lecturer talk, defined as the way lecturers deliver, interact, and engage with students, plays a critical role in either facilitating or hindering students' comprehension and participation.

Several recent studies have addressed the general challenges and outcomes of EMI implementation in Indonesia. Students often struggle with academic content in EMI courses due to limited language support, suggesting a need for more adaptive teaching strategies (Santoso and Rindu Kinasih 2022). Lestari et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of classroom interaction in virtual EMI settings and how lecturer engagement techniques can significantly affect student motivation. Specific scaffolding talk, such as prompting, modeling, and extending, has a positive impact on student

behavioral engagement in ESP classrooms (Afendi, Munir, and Setiawan 2020). While these studies have expanded our understanding of EMI pedagogy, they often focus on institutional or macro-level challenges, overlooking micro-level dynamics such as the types of lecturer talk and their direct influence on students' classroom behavior and learning outcomes.

The current research seeks to fill this gap by exploring university students' perceptions of different types of lecturer talk in EMI classrooms and how these influence their participation and comprehension. Unlike previous studies that generally address EMI from policy or curriculum perspectives, this study highlights the nuanced interpersonal communication between lecturers and students, which remains underexplored. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on the qualitative, student-centered analysis of lecturer talk and its role in shaping classroom interaction and understanding in EMI contexts. This research offers practical insights for lecturers to refine their communication strategies in EMI environments, ensuring more inclusive and effective learning experiences for students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Medium Instruction (EMI) refers to the use of English to teach academic content in contexts where English is not the first language. EMI has become a central policy in many non-English-speaking countries, including Indonesia, as a means of increasing academic competitiveness and fostering global communication skills (Dearden 2014). However, the success of EMI depends not only on students' language proficiency, but also on pedagogical strategies, particularly the way lecturers communicate in class. According to Linlin, Jeyaraj, and Ismail (2024) teacher talk, comprising questioning, elaborating, praising, giving directions, and encouraging student responses, plays a significant role in enhancing students' language development and engagement. These varied forms of teacher-initiated interaction are essential for creating a communicative and supportive learning environment, as they actively involve students in the learning process and foster a more interactive classroom dynamic.

Afendi, Munir, and Setiawan (2020) in their study published in *EnjourMe*, they found that scaffolding talk, such as prompting, modeling, and extending, plays a crucial role in shaping students' behavioral engagement in EMI classrooms. Recent research underscores the significant impact of teacher behaviors, such as praise and the acceptance of student ideas, on enhancing student engagement. For instance, Sun (2021) found that teacher caring behaviours and praise notably increase student participation in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Firdaus (2015) observed that effective praise strategies, including descriptive feedback and positive reinforcement, foster positive student engagement characterized by active participation and increased confidence. Despite these findings, many English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) contexts continue to be dominated by monologic lecturing, which can suppress students' willingness to participate, particularly when students fear judgment or lack confidence in using English.

Despite the growing body of research on English Medium Instruction (EMI), few studies have delved into how students perceive different types of lecturers talk and how this affects their classroom participation and comprehension. Most prior research has focused on institutional challenges, such as policy implementation and curriculum design (Simbolon 2021), with less emphasis on micro-level interactions in the classroom. As noted by Puspitasari and Ishak (2023) While EMI is increasingly implemented across Indonesian universities, students' voices regarding their actual classroom experiences, particularly related to how lecturers communicate, remain underexplored. This study addresses that gap by exploring lecturer talk from students' perspectives through qualitative interviews, thereby offering a closer look into the relational and linguistic aspects of EMI teaching that have often been overlooked in existing literature.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore students' perceptions of lecturer talk in English Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms. This approach was selected to obtain rich, contextual insights into students' real experiences and perspectives in classroom interactions.

Participants

Six undergraduate students majoring in English Education at a university in East Jakarta were purposively selected. These participants were chosen due to their active involvement in EMI-based courses, making them suitable to reflect on various types of lecturer talk and its effects on their learning and willingness to communicate.

Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility while maintaining focus on the core themes of teacher talk and student engagement. The interview questions were adapted from Nasir, Yusuf, and Wardana (2019), who examined teacher talk in EFL classroom settings in Indonesia. The questions were adjusted to suit the student perspective:

1. From the seven types of teacher talk (i.e., accepting feelings, praise or encouragement, accepting or using an idea of students, asking questions, lecture, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority), which type do your lecturers use most in classroom interactions?
2. How do you feel about that type of teacher talk? Does it help you understand the lesson better?
3. When do you usually feel comfortable responding or asking questions during classroom interactions?
4. How do you usually respond or ask questions in class when the lecturer uses English?

5. If you do not ask questions in class, does it mean you already understood the lesson or not? Can you explain why?
6. What kind of lecture talk or classroom situation makes you feel encouraged to ask questions in English?

Data Analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The coding process followed an adapted framework based on the types of teacher talk, focusing on identifying common patterns in how students experienced and interpreted lecturer talk. Codes were clustered into categories aligned with the functions of teacher talk, such as directive, facilitative, and evaluative communication.

This approach aligns with recent studies that have employed qualitative methods to analyze teacher talk in classroom interactions. For instance, Hustiana and Akbar (2021) investigated the patterns of English classroom interaction, emphasizing the role of teacher talk in facilitating effective communication and learning. Similarly, Wahyuni et al. (2022) highlighted the significance of teacher talk in promoting student engagement and participation in EFL classrooms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored students' perceptions of lecturer talk in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms at a university in East Jakarta. These findings highlight the types of lecturer talk students most frequently encountered, their responses to these types, and the perceived influence on their classroom participation and comprehension.

1. Domination of the Lecturing Method

Most participants reported that lecturers primarily used **directive types of talk**, such as giving instructions and extended lecturing. While this style helped structure the lesson clearly, students felt that it limited opportunities for interaction. One participant stated:

"Sometimes the lecturer talks too much, and I don't know when I can ask something. It feels like we just listen and not part of the learning."

This finding aligns with previous studies (e.g., Firdaus, 2015; Simbolon, 2021) that note monologic lecturing can discourage active student engagement, especially in EMI settings where language barriers exist.

2. Encouragement and Praise Promote Participation

When professors utilized praise or encouragement, students reported feeling more motivated and confident. This type of lecturer discourse helped students feel recognized and valued, even if their English wasn't flawless. One student mentioned:

“When the lecturer says ‘Good question’ or ‘Nice try’, it helps me feel less afraid to speak in English.”

These findings support Sun (2021) and Firdaus (2015), who emphasized the role of teacher praise in reducing student anxiety and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere.

3. Importance of Questioning and Accepting Student Ideas

Several participants stated that asking questions and welcoming student views were the most interesting aspects of the lecturer discussion. These tactics encouraged students to think critically and respond, thus increasing their engagement. For instance:

“If the lecturer asks a question and accepts my answer—even if it's not fully correct—it helps me understand better.”

This reflects Afendi, Munir, and Setiawan's (2020) findings that interactive strategies like prompting and extending can enhance behavioral engagement in EMI classrooms.

4. Emotional Comfort Affects Willingness to Participate

Students noted that their **emotional comfort** during class significantly influenced their willingness to speak. Lecturers who showed empathy, patience, and openness created a safer environment for students to take risks in using English. One participant shared:

"I feel more confident when the lecturer smiles or nods while I speak. It's like they understand I'm still learning."

This supports the notion that **affective factors** in lecturer talk, such as warmth and encouragement, are crucial in EMI contexts where learners may feel vulnerable due to limited proficiency.

5. Language Use and Code-Switching

Although EMI encourages the usage of just English, students claimed that occasional code-switching or multilingual clarification helped them better understand complex ideas. While students valued EMI's English-only focus, careful use of Indonesian in particular situations helped prevent cognitive overload.

"Sometimes I really don't understand. If the lecturer explains a bit in Bahasa, it helps a lot."

This finding resonates with translanguaging perspectives (as discussed in Linlin et al., 2024), where flexible language use supports deeper understanding without undermining EMI objectives.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into how different types of lecturers talk impact student participation and comprehension in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms. The findings reveal that students are more engaged and responsive when lecturers use interactive and facilitative communication strategies, such as asking questions, providing praise or encouragement, and accepting or building upon students' ideas. These types of talk not only support students' understanding of academic content but also foster a more comfortable and motivating learning environment, especially for learners who may lack confidence in using English.

On the other hand, directive or monologic teaching styles, such as extended lecturing without interaction or criticism without justification, tend to hinder student involvement. In such settings, students may become passive participants due to fear of making mistakes or not being fully able to comprehend the material. This highlights a critical issue in EMI contexts, where both language proficiency and teaching approach must be aligned to support effective learning.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of considering students' voices when evaluating teaching practices in EMI classrooms. While institutional efforts to promote EMI are important, they must be accompanied by a shift in classroom dynamics that prioritizes two-way communication and student-centered engagement. As EMI continues to expand in Indonesian higher education, it becomes increasingly important to focus on micro-level interactions that directly shape students' classroom experiences.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small and limited to six students from a single university, which may not fully represent the diversity of student experiences in EMI classrooms across different contexts. Additionally, the study relied solely on self-reported data through interviews, which might be influenced by students' perceptions or memory recall. Future research could benefit from including classroom observations and lecturer perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of lecturer talk in EMI environments. Broader and more diverse samples may also help validate and generalize the findings of this study.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of EMI studies by emphasizing the role of lecturer talk as a key factor in promoting meaningful learning. Lecturers who are mindful of how they communicate and who actively work to create inclusive, supportive, and interactive environments can significantly enhance student outcomes in EMI classrooms.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several important suggestions can be offered to enhance the effectiveness of lecturer talk in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms. First, lecturers are encouraged to reduce monologic teaching styles and adopt more interactive communication. Techniques such as asking questions, giving praise, and accepting students' ideas have been shown to foster greater student participation and engagement.

Furthermore, higher education institutions should provide regular professional development and training for lecturers, particularly those teaching in EMI contexts. These programs should focus on classroom discourse strategies and effective communication in multilingual environments. Additionally, the use of scaffolding techniques, such as modeling, prompting, and extending, can support students who struggle with comprehension due to language limitations, ultimately helping them to better understand the lesson.

Creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere is also essential. Such an environment can ease students' anxiety about making mistakes in English and encourage more active participation. Lecturers should also consider gathering regular feedback from students about their

communication style and classroom interaction, so adjustments can be made to meet students' needs more effectively.

Lastly, incorporating visual aids or occasional bilingual explanations when necessary can help bridge understanding gaps without compromising the goals of EMI. By implementing these suggestions, EMI classrooms can become more inclusive, communicative, and student-centered, contributing to both improved language development and academic achievement.

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