# TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PILOT TEACHER TRAINING ON EMI

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| | *As teachers are an essential element in education, there is always a need to improve their skills from time to time. In Al-Hasra Foundation, there is a need for internationalizing the institution so the teachers were equipped with a training on EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction). This training was the first training conducted to meet the needs of the institution. This study was aimed at knowing the perception the teachers have towards the first implementation of the training and the challenges the teachers had during the training. There was some research that was done to examine teachers' perception towards the training they received, but the training was not about EMI. Therefore, this study was undertaken to fill the gap. Fifteen non-English teachers of the Al Hasra foundation joined the teacher training. The data of this case study research were taken from the questionnaires, classroom observation and video as the observation aid. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed to get the percentage and some of the data were analyzed using theme analysis. In addition, the classroom observation was analyzed to enrich the findings. The result showed that teachers of Al-Hasra Foundation performed a positive perception towards the pilot teacher training on EMI by demonstrating that the training has improved their knowledge on the use of English in a classroom context. Though the teachers had problems regarding the language competence, they were positive that the next training will help them resolve the problem.* |

## INTRODUCTION

One of the keys to a better education is a better quality of the teachers. Therefore, some schools and educational institutions hold regular teacher training to boost the teachers' quality. They believe that improving the teachers' quality will positively affect the quality of the students as it is a tool for teachers to enhance their learning outcomes (Guskey, 2005; Murphy, 2005). Through the development program, teachers will acquire strategies such as an instructional procedure aimed at helping students reach their learning goals. Teacher training also has an important role in providing updates related to teaching practices and support based on teachers' needs and interests (Hunzicker, 2011). By addressing their need and interest, teachers are most likely to be more motivated in the program itself.

Despite having some advantages, not all schools get access to hold this teacher training program due to the fund limitation. To address this limitation, universities have provided a scheme through the community service program. The Law No. 20 of 2003 about the Indonesian Educational System, claims that universities are obligated to organize education, research, and community service. One of the activities that can be done is providing schools with some lecturers as a trainer for the teacher training program. This cooperation can benefit both parties: the school and the university.

This research was conducted based on the community service in SMK Al Hasra, Depok. Al-Hasra foundation is located in Bojongsari, Depok, West Java. This foundation provides education services for different levels including junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), and vocational high school (SMK). SMK Al Hasra offers two majors; Syariah Banking and Computer and Network Engineering. For a long time, SMK Al Hasra has had a dream to change its status from a national school to an international one. Departing from the school's vision to be an international school, SMK Al Hasra needs to prepare its teachers to conduct the teaching and learning in English. The target of the teacher training is the non-English teachers because they haven't mastered this language yet.

The material given to the teacher is the introduction to EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction). In EMI, English is not seen as a subject but as a medium. English is expected to perform in different types of communication in the four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ibrahim, 2014). This project was the pilot project so its target is more to give the teachers the basic knowledge of EMI. The material selected was considered light as it was the pilot project. The material was focused on familiarizing the instruction used in the classroom including how to greet the students, lead the prayer, check students' attendance, respond to lateness, confirm readiness, and review the previous lesson. The teachers worked collaboratively to solve the case study and practice each of the expressions they can use in the classroom.

As this project was the pilot project, this research was aimed at answering two research questions: 1. What are teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of the EMI teacher training program? 2. What are the challenges teachers face during the EMI teacher training program? Much previous research on teachers' perspectives on the implementation of teachers training had been conducted before (Ulla, 2017; Idris et al, 2007; Jones and Bevins, 2007; Kagoda and Ezati, 2014; Hansen-Thomas et al, 2016; Al Asmari, 2016) but the teacher training conducted was not about the EMI. Therefore, research on this topic is rarely found, especially in the Indonesian context. In addition, the focus of this teacher training development is to conduct an inquiry into the teachers' response to the program.

## English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

Due to its rapidly growing trend, EMI is now applied in many learning institutions in the world, including in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries (Dearden, 2013). Macaro (2015, p.7) even calls the phenomenon an "unstoppable train". Many universities, high schools, and primary schools are following the trend. These institutions see the potential use of EMI despite its challenging implementation. By implementing EMI, students can receive greater English exposure because of the daily basis use of English. In EMI, students not only learn English as a subject but rather use it as a medium. The application of EMI also allows students to get exposed to the use of English as a classroom language. They can acquire certain classroom commands through its uses as a medium of instruction (Dickson, 1996). Moreover, he argues that teachers can provide modeling for the students to feel comfortable and confident to use English. By giving them a model to follow, students can leave their conservative perspective that sees English only as a subject behind. They are likely to appreciate the language more because of its wider use.

Apart from the positive sides of it, there are some challenges that the stakeholders have to cope with. In the Indonesian context, the two prominent challenges are linguistic and structural. In the implementation of EMI, teachers or lecturers, and students often deal with issues related to language. These language issues are also called linguistic challenges (Bradford, 2016). Some students find it difficult to understand the lecture or teaching content in English (Hellekjaer, 2010). Inadequate English proficiency is one of the contributing factors to the linguistic challenge. Besides, teachers or lecturers also find it challenging to

have mixed proficiency levels of students in the EMI classes (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). The choice of language command should be carefully decided to avoid language problems in the classroom.

Another challenge in EMI implementation, structural challenges, is related to the availability of teaching staff that is able and willing to teach EMI classes. Even when the teaching staff are linguistically able to handle the class, some of them may be reluctant to do it (Vinke et al., 1998). The lack of financial incentives is one of the triggers for this reluctance. For some others, the insufficient number of training is the problem. The earnestness of the institution in making the teaching staff capable and confident can be seen through their effort to accomplish the goal.

**EMI Teacher Training**

Giving teachers access to teacher training means giving them opportunities to learn and grow. Ohata (2007) believes that teacher training corresponds to Wallace's applied science and craft models. In the applied science model, teachers put into practice the knowledge they acquire from research-based theories. Meanwhile, in the craft model, the learning is conducted by imitating an expert that acts as a role model (Wallace, 1991).

In the EMI context, the two kinds of improvements teachers can undertake are in language proficiency and teaching strategies. Based on the survey done by Costa and Coleman (2013), 30% of the universities confirmed that low English proficiency is their biggest challenge in conducting the class in English. Similarly, Guarda and Helm (2017) also believe that teachers have difficulties with their low English proficiency. Further, they claim that teachers are also struggling with teaching approaches. In short, the EMI teacher training should ideally focus on these two difficulties.

**RESEARCH METHOD**
**Research Design**

This current study used a case study as the research design. A case study is a research methodology that is aimed at generalizing results based on the study of an individual or a group of people (Heale & Twycross, 2018). This study investigated a group of teachers: non-English teachers of SMA and SMK Al-Hasra. This study aimed to answer the research questions regarding the perception that teachers had after participating in the pilot teacher training program on EMI and the challenges the teachers faced during the training program. To answer the research questions, two instruments of data collection were used. The questionnaires were given before and after the training program. The class observation was monitored through an observation sheet. Besides, the researcher used video that captured the whole situation as the observation aid.

**Population and Sample**

The research participants were non-English teachers of SMA and SMK Al-Hasra. This school was selected among any other high schools in Depok due to its vision to switch from a national to an international school. Apart from the vision, there were not many preparations done to get the teachers ready for the institution's internationalization. Therefore, this pilot teacher training on EMI was aimed at giving the teachers initial preparation before running the program.

In total, twenty-five participants were invited to the teacher training but only fifteen participants came to the program; eleven female teachers and four male teachers. Most of the participants were between 25-35 years old (60%). Most of the participants are Mathematics teachers (4 people) while the rest teach various subjects including Biology, Physics, Geography, Digital Communication, Japanese Language, Civic Education, Accountancy of Syariah Banking, Entrepreneurship, and Productive Banking.

**Instruments**

In this research, the researcher utilized questionnaires and class observation as the instruments for collecting the data. The questionnaires were given in printed versions in the classroom so the research participants could fill up the questionnaire right away. In total, there are two questionnaires used. The first questionnaire was given before the teacher training started while the second one was given after the teacher training. In the pre-teaching questionnaire, there were five open-ended questions and five close-ended questions. Meanwhile, in the post-teaching questionnaire, there were five open-ended questions and four close-ended questions. There are more open-ended questions because the researcher wanted to dig deeper into the participants' perceptions. Krosnick (2018) also states that the use of open-ended questions has a prominent role in survey research. To interpret the result of the open-ended questions, the researcher classified the participants' answers into some small categories.

The class observation was written based on the observation from the head of the International Office during the training. She was observing the training and helping the researcher to set the room for the training. Not only the observation sheet, but the researcher also used video as the observation aid. The researcher used a mobile phone and a tripod to record the video. The video captured the interactions between the students and their teacher.

**Data Analysis**

To capture the perception that teachers have towards the teacher training on EMI, the researcher analyzed the data required from the instruments. The data from closed-ended questions in both questionnaires were calculated to get the percentage. These data were analyzed to answer the first research question. Meanwhile, the open-ended questions were analyzed by using theme analysis to answer the second research question. The themes were drawn based on the participants' answers. In addition, the qualitative data were enriched with the class observation analysis from the observation sheet and the video.
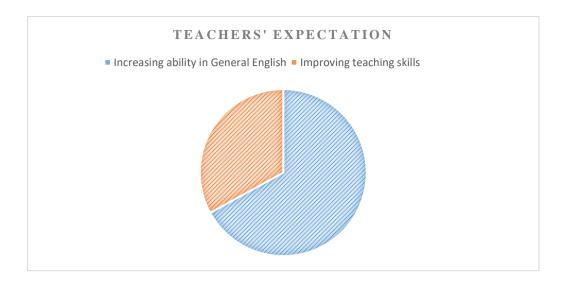
**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this current study were taken from some data sources including the pre-and post-teaching questionnaires, class observation, and video as the artifact of the study. This study aimed to understand the perception that teachers have towards the first teacher training on EMI and the challenges they had during the training.

**Pre-Teaching Questionnaire**

Based on the pre-teaching questionnaire, the majority of the teachers had used English in the classroom (80%). However, they believe that they were still at the beginner level and they did not have a sufficient amount of vocabulary. Further, they rarely used English in their daily life, even 20% stated that they had never used English in their daily activities. This result had well expressed the condition that we have as an EFL country. The only chance for using English is restricted to the microenvironment, in the classroom where we learn or teach in English. The opportunity to access English in the macro environment is hard to get.

Despite the low English proficiency and irregular use of the language, the research participants claimed that they are very happy with the teacher training (93%). Through this teacher training, they expected to get an increasing ability in General English (67%) and be able to apply that skill in the teaching and learning process (33%).

TEACHERS' EXPECTATION

■ Increasing ability in General English  ■ Improving teaching skills

The result above highlights the similarity of survey results conducted by Costa and Coleman (2013) and Guarda and Helm (2017). The common materials given in EMI training match the expectation of teachers at SMA and SMK Al Hasra.

**Post-Teaching Questionnaire**

From the second questionnaire, most of the research participants argued that using English as a medium of instruction was a good idea. They believe that English is very important to use as a medium of instruction. Further, they explained that the important use of English was related to the chance of increasing both students' and teachers' English proficiency (64%). Another reason was related to the vision of the school to be an international school (36%). Besides, they also claimed that they had the confidence to deliver the teaching materials in English, but to execute the idea, they needed to have enough preparation. Therefore, they showed enthusiasm during the training. They were not reluctant to ask questions and they were confident enough in the teaching demo part even though the teaching demo had not been a perfect one yet.

The comparison between before and after the teacher training revealed that most of the participants haven't mastered the use of English as a medium of instruction before they had the teacher training. They did not know how to begin and close the class in English, they did not know how to start speaking in English due to the lack of vocabulary, and they did not understand the importance of English as a medium of instruction. They knew it was important but they did not understand the reason.

After getting the training, fifty percent of the participants argued that they started to understand the use of English, especially in the teaching context. Other positive things that they acquired after the teacher training was improved confidence, enjoyment, and bravery. With the high positivism during the training, it was understandable that the participants did not take the training as a burden. Instead, they enjoyed the process. They got to know better how to begin and end the class in English, they added their knowledge on the phrases they might use in the classroom, they picked up the correct pronunciation for instructions used in the classroom, and they acquire some new vocabularies that they need to use during the teaching process.

In the post-teaching questionnaire, the research participants were also asked to give some suggestions for the program. They wrote that they were eager to receive similar training on EMI as the follow-up of the first training. They hoped that the teacher training could be conducted continuously so that they can keep improving their English skills and improving their motivation. In addition, they also hoped that there will be specific English training that

can match the subject they teach; for example, English for Science Teachers. Some suggested that the duration of the training should be longer so that they would have a longer time to practice. Others hope that there would be a program like "English Day" that the school can initiate to widen the scope of English usage. The participants believed that making a habit of using English in a wider environment would boost their English skills. Reflecting on some suggestions given by the research participant, it could be seen that the training participants took part in the training program intentionally. They realized that in one training, they would not achieve the best result so follow-up training is essential. They also were determined in helping to achieve the internalization program of their school by giving an idea for making the use of English a habitual activity. These high motivations and positive attitudes could be reflected in their answer to the second questionnaire.

From the questionnaire, the participants admitted that they dealt with some challenges during the training due to the lack of linguistic competence. Most of the participants argued that they had a low vocabulary bank and could not speak English fluently. For some teachers, these challenges led to confidence issues in using English as the medium of instruction. In the discussion the researcher had with the teachers during the training, it was also revealed that some of the teachers were not confident enough to talk in English in the classroom as students' English mastery was even better than theirs. However, they also mentioned that the training did help them gain confidence as they felt they had the practice they needed from the training.

**Class Observation**

The observation result indicated that the training participants were actively involved during the training because the teacher provided them with activities that were arranged based on the level of difficulty. The difficulty was raised gradually so that the participants did not show any reluctance as the scaffoldings are sufficient for them to move to a more challenging task. The formative assessment was given several times during the lesson. Further, the class observation revealed that the teacher always tried to link the materials with the participants' real experience in teaching. This session could improve the participants' motivation in being active in the training. Once a participant responded to the teacher's questions related to their experience, other participants were triggered to follow the discussion.

The video that was used as the observation aid showed that the teacher assisted them by answering the questions they had and gave them constructive feedback for their pronunciation. One of the mispronounced words was "were". The participants pronounced it as "where". The teacher then explained that these two words should be pronounced differently. The way of correcting the mistakes was done casually so they just laughed at the mistake together. After getting the corrected pronunciation, the participants kept on repeating the correct form. This assistance may be the contributing factor to students' enjoyment as they mentioned in the questionnaire.

**CONCLUSION**

In short, the teachers of SMA and SMK Al Hasra reflected their positive attitudes towards the pilot teacher training program on EMI by increasing motivation and self-confidence based on the results shown in the research instruments. Their expectation towards the training was successfully achieved as they all confirmed it in the post-training questionnaire. These positive perceptions were the result of the enjoyment they had during the training session. Another component of teachers' expectation, the improvement in English skills, could be fulfilled through the improving ability in using English. Moving from not knowing to mastering the expressions used in the classroom positively affected teachers' perceptions as well. The video also reflected the participants' ability to use the teaching

instructions well. They used the right order of teaching, with proper use of English in the pre-teaching, whilst teaching, and post-teaching. The teaching demo they did was also beneficial as their real practice at the same time helped them gain more confidence.

Despite having a positive perception towards the training, the participants admitted that language competence is the most prominent challenge they had. Having a lack of vocabulary and doubting on the correct way of pronouncing the English words were the specific challenges participants had to cope with. The participants realized that improving their English skill was one way to solve the problems. Therefore, they hope that the training program will be conducted regularly in the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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