

ABSTRACT

Muhammad Muammar, 2026. "English Education Students' Challenges in Learning English at The International Program of English Education (IPEE): A Study at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu" Skripsi, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Pembimbing: Ivan Achmad Nurcholis, M.Pd.

Learning English in an English-medium learning environment requires students to understand academic content while simultaneously using English for communication and academic activities. However, students may face various linguistic and pedagogical challenges during the learning process. This study aimed to identify the linguistic challenges faced by English Education students in learning English in the International Program of English Education (IPEE) and to examine the pedagogical challenges related to teaching methods and instructional materials. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design. The participants were eight English Education students enrolled in the International Program of English Education (IPEE) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Data were collected through a 20-item closed-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the theoretical framework of linguistic and pedagogical challenges, and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire covered linguistic aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as pedagogical aspects, including teaching methods and instructional materials. The findings showed that students experienced challenges in both linguistic and pedagogical areas. Speaking skills and vocabulary mastery emerged as the most prominent linguistic challenges, followed by difficulties in grammar, listening, reading, and writing. Students particularly experienced difficulties in expressing ideas spontaneously, understanding unfamiliar academic vocabulary, maintaining grammatical accuracy, understanding different accents and fast speech, and comprehending complex academic texts. Pedagogically, students faced challenges related to teaching methods, learning materials, teaching pace, and classroom participation. Interactive and student-centered activities were perceived as helpful, while fast-paced instruction and complex academic materials, particularly journal articles, increased students' difficulties. Therefore, linguistic and pedagogical challenges are closely interconnected, and appropriate teaching methods, adequate learning support, and suitable instructional materials are needed to help students manage the demands of learning English in an English-medium academic environment.

Keywords: Students' Challenges, Learning English, Linguistic Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, International Program of English Education.

ABSTRAK

Muhammad Muammar, 2026. ""English Education Students' Challenges in Learning English at The International Program of English Education (IPEE): A Study at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu" Skripsi, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Pembimbing: Ivan Achmad Nurcholis, M.Pd.

Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dalam lingkungan pembelajaran yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar mengharuskan mahasiswa untuk memahami materi akademik sekaligus menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam komunikasi dan kegiatan akademik. Namun, mahasiswa dapat menghadapi berbagai tantangan linguistik dan pedagogis selama proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan linguistik yang dihadapi mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris pada International Program of English Education (IPEE) serta mengkaji tantangan pedagogis yang berkaitan dengan metode pengajaran dan bahan ajar. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini berjumlah delapan mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang terdaftar pada International Program of English Education (IPEE) di Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner tertutup sebanyak 20 butir yang dikembangkan oleh peneliti berdasarkan kerangka teori mengenai tantangan linguistik dan pedagogis, serta wawancara semi-terstruktur. Kuesioner mencakup aspek linguistik, yaitu kosakata, tata bahasa, menyimak, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis, serta aspek pedagogis yang meliputi metode pengajaran dan bahan ajar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa menghadapi tantangan baik dalam aspek linguistik maupun pedagogis. Keterampilan berbicara dan penguasaan kosakata menjadi tantangan linguistik yang paling menonjol, diikuti oleh kesulitan dalam tata bahasa, menyimak, membaca, dan menulis. Mahasiswa terutama mengalami kesulitan dalam mengungkapkan ide secara spontan, memahami kosakata akademik yang belum familiar, menggunakan tata bahasa secara tepat, memahami berbagai aksen dan kecepatan berbicara, serta memahami teks akademik yang kompleks. Dalam aspek pedagogis, mahasiswa menghadapi tantangan yang berkaitan dengan metode pengajaran, bahan ajar, kecepatan penyampaian materi, dan partisipasi dalam kelas. Kegiatan pembelajaran yang interaktif dan berpusat pada mahasiswa dipandang membantu proses pembelajaran, sedangkan penyampaian materi yang terlalu cepat dan bahan ajar yang kompleks, khususnya artikel jurnal, meningkatkan kesulitan mahasiswa. Dengan demikian, tantangan linguistik dan pedagogis saling berkaitan, sehingga diperlukan metode pengajaran yang sesuai, dukungan pembelajaran yang memadai, dan bahan ajar yang tepat untuk membantu mahasiswa menghadapi tuntutan pembelajaran bahasa

Inggris dalam lingkungan akademik yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar.

Kata kunci: Tantangan Mahasiswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Tantangan Linguistik, Tantangan Pedagogis, International Program of English Education.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

English has become increasingly important in higher education as universities seek to prepare students for academic and professional environments that are more internationally connected. The use of English is not limited to English language courses but can also be found in the teaching of academic subjects. In many countries where English is not the first language, universities have introduced international programs in which English is used as a language of instruction. This approach is commonly known as English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), Macaro et al. (2018) define EMI as the use of English to teach academic subjects in settings where English is not the students' first language. Through EMI, students are expected to develop their academic knowledge while using English as part of their regular learning activities.

The use of English in academic settings can provide students with opportunities to encounter and use English more frequently. In an EMI classroom, students may listen to lectures, read academic materials, participate in discussions, give presentations, and complete assignments in English. Such continuous exposure can provide a meaningful environment for students to develop their English proficiency while studying their academic subjects. Furthermore, this potential benefit is supported by (Lee et al., 2025), whose meta-analysis involving 8,747 participants found positive effects of EMI on both content knowledge and English proficiency. Therefore, EMI can serve not only as a way of delivering academic content but also as an environment in which students have opportunities to develop their English through academic use.

At the same time, using English to learn academic content is not always straightforward for students, particularly in contexts where English is learned as a foreign language. Students are required to understand the subject being taught while also processing the English used to explain that subject. This situation can place additional demands on students because they need to pay attention to the meaning

of the academic content and the language used at the same time. In Indonesia, where English is generally used as a foreign language, opportunities to use English outside the classroom can also be limited for many students. As a result, the classroom becomes an important setting for students to encounter and use English in academic communication (Irham & Wahyudi, 2023).

These conditions can lead to various linguistic challenges. Students may encounter unfamiliar academic vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, and challenges in understanding spoken English, particularly when lecturers speak quickly or use unfamiliar accents. Moreover, they may also need more time to formulate and express their ideas when participating in discussions or presentations. Similar concerns have been reported in research on EMI and English-medium learning, where students' language proficiency and academic language demands can influence their classroom participation and understanding of academic content (Galloway & Rose, 2021). In this situation, knowing English in general may not always be sufficient because academic learning requires students to use English in more specific and demanding ways.

The linguistic demands of EMI are also closely related to the materials and activities used in the classroom. Academic textbooks and journal articles, for example, may contain formal expressions, discipline-specific terminology, complex sentence structures, and dense information. Students therefore need to understand not only individual words but also how information is organized and presented in academic texts. According to Webb & Nation, 2020; Richards & Pun, (2023) research has shown that academic English can present additional challenges for learners because it requires familiarity with vocabulary and language patterns that are less common in everyday communication. These challenges may become more noticeable when students are asked to read journal articles, write academic assignments, or discuss academic topics in English.

The way lecturers conduct the learning process can also influence how students experience EMI. Teaching methods, the pace of instruction, classroom interaction, and the way learning materials are presented can either support or increase the demands placed on students. A student may understand the content when it is explained through examples and discussion but struggle when the same

material is delivered through a long explanation without sufficient time for processing. Likewise, students may have opportunities to participate in class but hesitate to use those opportunities because they are unsure about their vocabulary or grammar. Previous research has highlighted the importance of interaction, teacher support, and appropriate classroom practices in helping students manage the linguistic and academic demands of EMI (Galloway & Rose, 2021; Shao & Rose, 2024).

The situation is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where universities have increasingly developed international and English-medium programs. However, the implementation of EMI is not necessarily the same across institutions. According to (Coleman et al., 2024), for example, examined EMI policy and practice across Indonesian universities and found differences in how institutions approach and implement EMI. This indicates that students' experiences of EMI are influenced by the particular context in which the program is implemented. For this reason, examining EMI in a specific institution can provide a more detailed understanding of the challenges students actually experience in their daily academic activities.

One such context can be found in the International Program of English Education (IPEE) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB). Based on an initial interview with the Head of the English Education Study Program, IPEE was established to provide students with a more intensive English-learning environment and to prepare them for international academic experiences. The program adopts an American-based General Education (Gen Ed) curriculum and uses English as the primary language of communication during the learning process. Several courses are taught by lecturers with strong English proficiency, including lecturers from outside the university who may teach either online or offline. Students are also admitted through a placement test designed to assess their English ability.

The learning environment in IPEE gives students regular exposure to English through academic activities. Students are expected to use English when listening to lecturers, reading learning materials, participating in discussions, giving presentations, and completing academic assignments. Such an environment can provide valuable opportunities for students to develop their English. However, the regular use of English also means that students have to deal with the language

demands of their academic activities on a continuous basis. Their experiences may therefore involve not only challenges related to their English proficiency but also challenges related to the way teaching and learning are carried out in the program.

These challenges are particularly worth examining because the students in IPEE are English Education students. Their academic experience is different from that of students who study English only as a supporting subject. English Education students are expected to develop their own English proficiency as well as build the academic knowledge and skills needed for their future work as English teachers. Their ability to understand academic content, communicate ideas in English, and participate actively in classroom activities is therefore an important part of their academic preparation. Research on English teacher education has similarly emphasized the need for future English teachers to develop sufficient language competence alongside the knowledge and skills required for teaching (Eddraoui et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have discussed EMI from different perspectives, there is still a need to understand how these challenges appear in particular educational contexts. Existing research has examined the effects of EMI on students' learning and English proficiency (Lee et al., 2025), the implementation of EMI in Indonesian universities (Coleman et al., 2024), and students' experiences with English-medium learning (Puspitasari & Ishak, 2023; Santoso et al., 2024). However, research that specifically examines the linguistic and pedagogical challenges experienced by English Education students in an international program in Bengkulu remains limited. This provides a reason to examine the experiences of students in IPEE at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu more closely.

Understanding these challenges is important because they may affect how students experience and respond to English-medium learning. Linguistic challenges may influence students' ability to understand lectures, participate in discussions, read academic materials, and express their ideas in English. At the same time, pedagogical aspects such as teaching methods, instructional materials, and teaching pace may shape how easily students can manage these linguistic demands. These two aspects are therefore not necessarily separate. For example, students with limited academic vocabulary may need more time to understand a journal article,

while a fast teaching pace may make it harder for them to process unfamiliar vocabulary and academic content at the same time.

For this reason, identifying students' challenges can provide useful information for improving the learning process in IPEE. Understanding what students experience can help lecturers consider how teaching activities, materials, and classroom interaction can better support students' learning needs. Support does not necessarily mean reducing students' exposure to English. Instead, it can involve providing clearer explanations, appropriate teaching pace, opportunities for interaction, and support in dealing with demanding academic language. Students can also develop their own strategies, such as reviewing vocabulary, rereading academic texts, preparing ideas before speaking, and using learning resources to support their understanding.

Based on the situation described above, this study aims to investigate the linguistic and pedagogical challenges experienced by English Education students in learning English in the International Program of English Education (IPEE) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The study focuses on the linguistic challenges experienced by the students and the pedagogical challenges related to teaching methods and instructional materials. By examining these challenges from the students' experiences, this study is expected to provide a clearer understanding of English-medium learning in an EFL context and offer useful information for lecturers and the study program in supporting students' learning in the International Program of English Education. Based on these considerations, the researcher conducted a study entitled "English Education Students' Challenges in Learning English at the International Program of English Education (IPEE): A Study at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu."

1.2. Research Problems and Questions

Based on the background of the study described above, the research questions in this study are formulated as follows:

1. What linguistic challenges do English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu face in learning English in the International Class?
2. What pedagogical challenges related to teaching methods and instructional materials do the students encounter in the International Class?

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the linguistic challenges faced by English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in learning English in the International Class.
2. To examine the pedagogical challenges related to teaching methods and instructional materials experienced by students in the International Class.

1.4. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the context of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in EFL settings. The findings will enrich the literature on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by providing empirical evidence on the linguistic and pedagogical challenges faced by students in international classroom contexts.

Furthermore, this study is expected to deepen theoretical understanding of the linguistic and pedagogical factors that influence students' language learning processes. The results may also support the development of conceptual discussions regarding learners' adaptation to EMI environments in multicultural academic contexts, especially in Indonesian higher education settings.

2. Practical Significance

- a. For Students: The findings of this study are expected to help English Education students understand the linguistic and pedagogical challenges they experience in international classes. This study may also provide insights into learning strategies that can help students improve their English skills and participate more confidently in the learning process.
- b. For Lecturers: This study is expected to provide insights for lecturers in understanding students' linguistic and learning difficulties. The findings may help lecturers improve their teaching approaches,

instructional materials, and classroom practices to create a more supportive English-medium learning environment.

- c. For Educational Institutions: The findings of this study may serve as a reference for educational institutions, particularly English Education programs, in improving international class programs. The results may support the development of learning support systems and policies that consider students' linguistic needs and pedagogical challenges.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to ensure clarity, the following key terms are defined operationally as used in this study:

1. English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) refers to the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the first language of the majority of students.
2. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to a learning context in which English is studied as a foreign language rather than used in everyday communication.
3. International Program of English Education (IPEE)
An International Program refers to an academic program that uses English and an internationalized curriculum to create a global learning environment.
4. Linguistic Challenges
Linguistic challenges refer to difficulties related to students' language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing.
5. Pedagogical Challenges
Pedagogical challenges refer to difficulties related to teaching methods and instructional materials that affect the learning process.