CONTENT LECTURERS' CHALLENGES
IN EMI CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

The development of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has received much attention of language researchers in the era of globalization and internationalization. Despite recognition of problems in implementation, EMI has been widely introduced and applied into higher education in non-native English-speaking (NNES) countries. The question of what challenges face content lecturers in teaching in EMI classrooms is our major focus in this study. The study collected data from 28 content lecturers in EMI programs in a public university in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The results from the questionnaire and interview reveal that content lecturers encounter a variation of challenges in EMI classrooms. Specifically, lecturers are challenged by students' language competence, preparation time for lectures, engaging the class discussion in English and their own language ability. The findings from the study are consistent with the findings of the previous research. Based on these findings, implications are made for enhancing the success of similar programs.

Keywords: English, English as a medium of instruction (EMI), challenges, content lecturers, students

1. Introduction

In line with the global trend, Vietnam has increased using EMI in higher education institutions in recent years. Accordingly, the Prime Ministerial Decision number 1400/QĐ-TTg (30 September 2008) launched a national initiative on foreign language teaching and learning in the educational system from 2008 to 2020. This policy is known

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as the National Foreign Language Project 2020 (Hung, 2011). A major development in this policy is to expand EMI courses. As noted in this policy, educational institutions are encouraged to develop and implement bilingual programs which aim to enhance their own training ability. Accordingly, the project proposes to begin EMI for approximately 20% of national, provincial, and other university students in certain subjects and sectors (Manh, 2012). Nevertheless, to nations that English is second/foreign language, the outcome of the EMI program is not as rewarding as it is supposed to be. It is acknowledged that there is a mismatch between the goals and actual implementation in studies in Asia (Hamid, 2013; Manh, 2012). It is obvious that teachers play a pivotal role for the success of EMI implementation. However, the quality and quantity of qualified English teachers are widely seen as problematic in Vietnam as in other Asian countries (Nguyen, 2011). Specifically in Vietnam context, not many content teachers are confident in using EMI. Hence, adopting EMI has become challenging, especially when lecturers and students had limited English language skills in many cases (Manh, 2012). It may be questioned what factors involving the EMI implementation challenge lecturers in teaching process and influence their achievement in the EMI courses.

The present study is going to investigate key challenges facing lecturers, who mostly are key players in achieving the EMI language policy goals. The research site of this study is a public university in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam that has been devoted to the promotion of English instruction policy for many years. In fact, this is one of the few universities in the Mekong Delta that first started to implement an English-medium instruction policy. Based on the challenges, relevant implications for EMI teaching and learning are made. In comparison with previous study on the literature, the contribution of the current study is particularly significant in several aspects. First, the results obtained from the study may contribute to improve and promote the quality of teaching/learning in a particular context. Second, this study offers both practical and academic contributions to the fields of English-medium instruction in higher education. Additionally, it adds to the existing research on internationalization, education in Asia and in Vietnam particularly by providing an in-depth insight for one EMI undergraduate program from the perspective of lecturers. Finally, the findings can shed light on what policy makers, administrators, and content teachers need to consider creating a more effective learning environment.

2. Literature review

In the present research, a working definition of *EMI is the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English* (Dearden, 2014). EMI focuses primarily on subject learning and

uses the language of instruction as a tool to perform that objective. EMI makes it obvious that the language of instruction is English.

One of the driving forces for the development of EMI is globalization, by which English is seen to play very crucial roles in assisting global academic exchange, advancement of knowledge, and career advancement and mobility (Montgomery, 2004). Secondly, the increase of EMI in higher education in non-native contexts is that textbooks and journals in most fields are published in English (Ashcraft, 2006). Thirdly, English is used as a lingua franca in many international settings. It is seen as the language of science and academia and more than 90% of all information in the world, for example, textbooks and research articles are written in English (Graddol, 1997). Moreover, it is believed that using EMI in higher learning institutions can promote students' interest and motivation in learning English language (Chang, 2010), while at the same time an EMI setting could serve as a community of practice for English learning and provide more opportunities for learners to use English in their academic studies (Gao, 2010).

However, for most of the teachers and students whose mother tongue is not English, an EMI context may cause challenges for them to get adapted to the EMI contexts and discourage their participations in classroom. Additionally, although an EMI approach is likely to develop teachers and learners' English language proficiency, it tends to produce pitfalls such as the compulsory enforcement of EMI without regard to instructors and students' English proficiency, a lack of a support system and available instructors to conduct EMI classes (Byun *et al*. 2011).

As noted in many previous research works, there are five major EMI challenges facing content lecturers in EMI classrooms, namely (1) *teachers' language abilities*, (2) *student's low English proficiency*, (3) *engaging the class discussion*, (4) *preparation time for lectures*, and (5) *teaching recourses*.

(1)   First and foremost, lecturers are reported to experience difficulties related to language ability to conduct EMI courses. Accordingly, Vinke *et al*., (1998) argue that teachers have difficulty expressing themselves fluently, correctly and effectively. The idea is clearly supported by Wilkinson (2005); lecturers encounter difficulties in using English for communication purposes, such as using humor, telling anecdotes, making digression, and giving spontaneous examples. In teaching process, moreover, some instructors tend to have problems with pronunciation, accent, fluency, intonation, grammar and even non-verbal behavior (Klaassen & De Graaff, 2001). More specifically, Tamtam *et al.* (2012) found that the main problem encountered by teachers was in explaining terminologies and abstract concepts in English.

(2)   Students' English proficiency is considered as one of the major factors challenging lecturers in the teaching process. As pointed out by Ashcraft (2006), content

lecturers face the challenges of teaching their subject courses in English to students who are not proficient enough to follow lectures. Some of these lecturers felt frustrated because in addition to their academic fields, they have to scope with language issues in their classrooms, which demands extra knowledge and skills regarding second language acquisition process.

(3)   The third challenge for EMI lecturers is a task of engaging class discussion in English (Yahaya *et al.*, 2009). It is found that the most prominent difficulty encountered by the content lecturers is getting students' responses in English. This in return affects the communication between lecturers and students and slows down the teaching process. It is argued that good students' unwillingness to speak up is not because they do not understand the lesson but rather because they are not proficient in English.

(4)   The next challenge is related to preparation time for lectures in English. As noted in Vinke's (1995) research, lecturers reported that they spent more time on preparing for teaching in English. Although none of the lecturers had attempted to quantify this extra time taken, their subjective experience was that significantly more time was needed. This extra time is due to lecturers looking up terms and phrases and planning lesson in English (Airey, 2011).

(5)   The final challenge is limited resources (Huong, 2010; Manh, 2012). In an attempt to examine several Asian countries' language policies, Baldauf *et al.* (2011, p.318) observe that "*funding for normal programs, the training of teachers and money for textbooks are all inadequate*".

As seen above, many previous relevant works have found the challenges facing content teachers in EMI classes; however, a search for the relevant literature in this field reveals a dearth of research in this field in the context of Vietnam. Especially, related research has yet to be done in higher education in the Mekong Delta, South of Vietnam. Thus, the present study is of particular significance.

3. Methods

3.1 Research questions
What challenges do content lecturers face in teaching an EMI course?
What should be done to improve the situation?

3.2 Participants
The study was conducted at a public university in the Mekong Delta. This university has enforced English-medium instruction for advanced Biotechnology major since 2006 and for advanced Aquaculture major since 2008. Firstly, a total of 28 content Vietnamese-speaking lecturers currently teaching content subjects for Advanced

Biotechnology and Aquaculture programs in the university participated in the study. Specifically, 11 out of 28 lecturers were teaching for Advanced Biotechnology, 12 out of 28 teaching for Aquaculture programs, and the rest teaching both programs. The subjects comprised 21 males (75%) and 7 females (25%), aged range from 30 to above 50. Concerning teaching experience in advanced programs, 46.4% of participants had more than 5 years, 46.4% experienced from 2 to 5 years, and 7.1 % had less than 2 years in teaching EMI courses. Most of the participants rated their English proficiency at intermediate and advanced level. Specifically, 10 were at intermediate level (35.7%) and 18 at advanced level (64.3%). Among the participants, 15 are Associate Professors, 11 hold doctoral degrees and 2 masters. Besides, 63% lecturers (18 out of 28 participants) already attended training programs for teaching EMI courses.

To investigate and gain deeply insights of lecturers' perspective on challenges in EMI classrooms, the interviews were done with 6 lecturer participants invited to participate in the interview based on their responses gained from the questionnaire. Lecturer 1 & 2 with their responses were most "strongly agree" or "agree"; Lecturer 3 & 4 got responses of most "neutral"; while Lecturer 5 & 6 were those of most "strongly disagree" or "disagree" in questionnaire results.

3.3 Research instruments

To address the research question, a questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data through asking all lecturers the identical questions with 5-point-Likert scales with choices ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was written in English and then translated into Vietnamese to make it more accessible to the participants whose native language is Vietnamese. The first questionnaire section included demographic items to gain information about the participants, while the second section contained 5-point-scale items/statements.

To gain more insights into participants' challenges in EMI classrooms, semi-structured interviews were constructed to obtain more information on participants' responses focused on challenges not specifically presented in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). Moreover, the interview was considered as a tool to double check the result from the questionnaire. Each interview comprised 7 open-ended questions focusing on lectureres' challenges in EMI classrooms. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese for 15-20 minutes each interviewee face-to-face and all the responses were recorded with participants' permission.

3.4 Procedure

After having been constructed, the questionnaire was piloted with a non-elective group of 5 content lecturers who were teaching in advanced programs at the university

investigated. The data collected from the piloted questionnaire were analysed to check its reliability. The result indicated that the questionnaire was reliable (with α=.87). The participants who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the major research. The official questionnaire copies were delivered to the participants through email. As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire was conducted in Vietnamese version in order to ensure that possible failure to understand the instruction or questions would not affect the responses because the participants are not English native speakers. Also, the Vietnamese version questionnaire enables the participants to provide their answers exhaustively to the issue set out in the questions. It took more than three weeks to get the questionnaire done and after this period of time, 28 copies (out of 40 initially) delivered were returned through email. The copies were then checked to ensure there were no missing answers for all items and no more than one answer for each item. All returned copies were accepted.

The interview was conducted two weeks after the questionnaires were distributed. As mentioned above, 6 content lecturers were selected for interviews. After selecting the representative participants, the researchers contacted them and sent the invitations for interviews. The place and time were pre-arranged in a way that was most convenient for the interviewees.

3.5 Data analysis

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire copies were coded and analysed by the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 16.0. First, the Reliability Coefficient Test was computerized to confirm the reliability. Second, the descriptive statistics tests were run to analyse means and standard deviations on the participants' challenges in EMI classrooms. Third, a one-sample T test was conducted to find out whether the means of participants' challenges in EMI classrooms was significantly different from a constant, called a test value. Also, the paired-samples T test was employed to evaluate the mean scores of each pair of clusters to compare which one is higher.

The recorded qualitative data from the interviews were restrained by the researchers to get the overall ideas of the participants. After that, basing on the recordings and the taken notes, the researchers transcribed the participants' responses in Vietnamese to have a profound understanding on the thoughts of the participants. Then the transcriptions were re-read carefully and critically analysed. Whenever misunderstanding occurred, the researchers contacted the participants to ask for clarifications. The Vietnamese transcriptions of the interview then were translated into English. All the steps were cross-checked by the researchers themselves.

4. Findings

4.1 Findings from the questionnaire

Data collected from the lecturer questionnaire was analyzed by SPSS Version 16.0, with the reliability coefficient of α=.897 (Appendix 1; Questionnaire, Section II: Challenges in teaching EMI courses). The descriptive statistic was run on the mean score of lecturers' perceptions of challenges in teaching EMI courses.

Table 1: Overall mean of lecturers' perceptions of challenges

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	SD
28	1.42	3.71	2.66	.55

It can be seen from Table 1 that the overall mean score of the participants performed in the questionnaire was not high *(M=2.66, SD=.55)*. One-sample T-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean score was significantly different from 3.0 (the average mean for average level of challenges). The results show that the sample mean *(M=2.66, SD=.55)* is significantly different from 3.0 *(t=-3.24, df =27, p=.003)*. The results indicate that challenges facing the lecturers are lower than the average level.

Next are the descriptive mean scores of the challenge causes:

Table 2: Mean scores of challenge causes

Causes	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	SD
(1) Students' low English proficiency (items: 12 – 16)	28	1.80	4.20	3.21	.70
(2) Preparation time for lectures (items: 20 – 22)	28	1.00	4.00	2.93	.77
(3) Engaging the class discussion (items: 17 – 19)	28	1.00	4.00	2.54	.85
(4) Language ability (items: 1 - 11)	28	1.00	3.82	2.48	.67
(5) Teaching resources (items: 23 – 24)	28	1.00	3.50	2.14	.71

As can be seen in Table 2, the mean scores are not high. Specifically, of all the five causes, (1) attains the highest mean score (M=3.21), followed by (2) (M=2.93). The mean scores of the rest are lower than the average score (M=3.0) and close to disagree scale of the study. A paired-samples T-test was conducted on (1) and (2) to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between the two mean scores. The results point out that there is no significant difference between them *(t=1.93; df=27, p=.064>.05)*. Thus, it

supports the conclusion that (1) and (2) both cause the same level of challenge; and thus lecturers encountered more challenges in (1) and (2) than in the other three.

Significantly, the noticeable items in the striking variables should be taken into consideration. Concerning the first cause, 67.8% lecturers agreed that the major difficulty they encountered was students' low English proficiency level, while 67.8% revealed students found difficult to understand terminology and science concepts in English. Also, 60.7% acknowledged that sometimes they had to switch their language from English to Vietnamese when students did not understand what they said.

In terms of preparation time for lectures, 50% needed more preparation time to master terminology and vocabulary of teaching the subjects in English. Besides, 75% said that it took longer time to prepare teaching materials in English than in Vietnamese. Moving on into the variable of engaging the class discussion in English, 21.4% claimed that students did not participate actively in the classroom discussion due to their lack of proficiency in English.

Regarding language ability, lecturers admitted that "*terminology and abstract concepts are difficult to explain in English*", they "*have to pause to search for the right word when lecturing*", and "*lecturing in English hinders them from going deeper into the content of the lessons than in Vietnamese*". All of the three items above receive 42.9% agreement for each. It can be seen that language ability causes considerable difficulties for lecturers when lecturing lectures in English.

4.2 Findings from the interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted on six lecturer participants, representing responses of high, average and low level of challenges based on their mean scores after calculating the questionnaire. The questions in the interview centered on challenges that content lecturers may face when they teach EMI courses.

General results from the interviews revealed that all the six interviewed participants had challenges when teaching EMI classes. Nevertheless, the level of challenges of each participant was different. In accordance with the findings from the questionnaire, there were four main themes of challenges in relation to language difficulties, students' low English proficiency, preparation time for lectures and engaging the class discussion.

First of all, most participants indicated that they faced difficulties in terms of language when lecturing content subjects in English. However, the difficulties somehow differed among the interviewed participants. They said:

"*In terms of English language, I don't have any difficulty. Nevertheless, if I teach in Vietnamese, the amount of information I provide students is 100%, when I conduct*

lessons in English, the knowledge content only reach 80%. Because I have to spend a lot of time to interpret terminology and concepts. In fact, the amount of information that I provide students in English is less than in Vietnamese."

(Lecturer 5)

To me, teaching in English is not a big challenge, however sometimes it is difficult to explain specialized knowledge and terminologies in English. Particularly, how to make students understand content knowledge in English is not easy, I have to explain in different ways. It takes a lot of time.

(Lecturer 6)

Though the two lecturers above did not directly mention language ability as the difficulty of teaching EMI courses, their responses revealed that lecturing in English was somehow a problem in teaching process. They had to spend more time on explaining terms and specialized knowledge. As a result, they covered less content in English lectures than they were able to in their mother tongue language. The other interviewees confirmed,

"Actually expressing content knowledge in English is more difficult than in Vietnamese, I have to choose appropriate words, and there are specialized terminologies that are difficult to explain in English. Besides, I have difficulty in pronouncing new words and terminologies."

(Lecturer 3)

By this response, the interviewee confirmed that lecturing in English is more difficult than in Vietnamese, particularly explaining terminologies in English. He also admitted that he had problems with pronunciation in English.

In fact, teaching content knowledge in English is a considerable challenge to content lecturers. This work creates pressure for the lecturer when teaching EMI courses for the first time. As illustrated in the responses of the participant below:

"This is the first semester I teach biology in English. Therefore, I have to practice lecturing many times before class. I have to prepare the lecture carefully, and think of what words I will say, how sentences are constructed in advance. In teaching process, I sometimes found it difficult to express myself correctly in English. As a result, my students did not understand what I mean or understand in a different way. Particularly, it was difficult to explain formula and terms to students. It took a lot of time of course.

After class, I always worried whether my students grasp the lesson content or not. That's my pressure in teaching EMI courses."

(Lecturer 1)

Through the participants' responses, it can be revealed that different participants would perceive different level of difficulties. However, in general, they have problems with lecturing in English, especially explaining terms and concepts in English. This finding is in line with the finding from the questionnaire.

Secondly, when being asked about the students' English level, all the interviewed participants asserted that students' language ability was one of the major difficulties in teaching process. Respondents agreed to a great extent that students' low English proficiency level caused great difficulties for lecturers in teaching process. Specifically, lecturers found it challenging to make all students understand the lecture. Several examples of the participants revealed,

"To be admitted to advanced program, students had to pass an entrance English exam. However, I think that listening and reading tests in the form of multiple-choice questions did not evaluate students' English level accurately. I realize that students are generally not in the same level. Some students are very good at English, but most of students are not good enough to follow the lectures. In this case, I tried to speak slowly and adjust my teaching method. It took a lot of time and the teaching process was slowed down."

(Lecturer 2)

Generally speaking, students' English level is different, therefore the level they grasp the lesson content is also different. For good students, I just explain briefly and they will understand. However, for lower level students, I have to adjust. Sometimes I have to use Vietnamese to explain important words.

(Lecturer 4)

It can be drawn out that, these participants asserted students' English level affect their teaching process. Accordingly, the lecturers need to put more effort and adapt other teaching methods and activities so that all of student could follow the lectures. Sharing the same view, one lecturer added,

"I have to repeat many times and sometimes switch my language from English to Vietnamese to help my students understand. I know I shouldn't use Vietnamese, but that is an only solution when students don't understand difficult terms even when I repeat times and use many ways to explain."

(Lecturer 2)

As can be seen that from the participants' responses, lecturers intend to use Vietnamese to instruct or explain difficult words when students get confused. This strategy of code switching is used widely in EMI classrooms. In accordance with the findings from the questionnaire, students' low English proficiency level is most challenging for content lecturers in teaching EMI courses.

Next, 5 out of 6 interviewees pointed out the difficulty related to preparation time for lectures in English. They agreed that it took a longer time to prepare lectures in English than in Vietnamese. When being asked about the reason why preparation time for lectures is a great difficulty, some participants explained,

When preparing the lectures in English, I must invest a lot of time. I have to spend time on grasping the new terms, preparing appropriate words to explain difficult terms in advance. Everything has to be well prepared. In fact, preparing lectures in English takes a lot of time.

(Lecturer 3)

I always keep in mind that not using Vietnamese in EMI classes, so before class I always prepare the lecture carefully. I always ask myself if students ask any question in relation to the lesson, how I answer the questions. Therefore, I ask myself many questions related to the lessons, I try to search vocabulary and prepare the answers in advance. To me, preparing lectures in English is a considerable challenge that I put a lot of time and effort.

(Lecturer 6)

Supporting the finding from the questionnaire, the finding from the interview indicated that lecturers need more preparation time for the lectures in English. Moreover, besides preparing lesson content, the interviewed participants also pointed out that they also prepare vocabulary of teaching and other issues related to the lesson content in advance (e.g. vocabularies, questions and answers so on.). Besides, several lecturers had difficulty in engaging the class discussion. The main reason is in relation to students' low English proficiency level. The lecturers commented on students that,

"Most students aren't active in classrooms. Students are very passive in speaking English. They still have difficulty in expressing their though and ideas in English. When being asked to share or present their ideas in class, they aren't confident to speak English in front of people because they are shy, afraid of making mistakes, lack vocabulary to express their thought."

(Lecturer 2)

In general, students are very active; however, some students are not active because of low proficiency in English (Lecturer 1). Once again, the responses of the lecturers support more evidence of students' English ability is still low. Therefore, students are not confident to speak in English due to being afraid of making mistakes and lacking vocabulary to express their ideas. In this case, to get students to response in English is a difficult task to the lecturers. Additionally, English proficiency hinders students from asking questions in English. As demonstrated in the other interviewees below,

There seems to be a decrease in the number of questions asked by students in EMI classes. Those students who are good at English tend to ask questions and they are the usual ones that answer my questions. For other students, they just kept silent from the beginning to the end of the course.

(Lecturer 4)

I teach analytic chemistry, a difficult subject to students. However, in teaching process students are rarely ask question in class. Even though I pose many questions to get students to response in English, they just keep silent. It means that the question was given and answered by myself. Therefore, the interaction and exchange between the teacher and students are very limited.

(Lecturer 5)

Although the findings from the questionnaire shows that engaging the class discussion was not a considerable challenge to content lecturers, the results from the interview claimed that the interviewees encountered challenges in engaging the class discussion due to students' low English proficiency.

Finally, when being asked about teaching resources, all of respondents revealed that they have satisfied with supplies of available teaching resources. Several examples of the respondents show that,

The EMI program is imported from overseas university, so we are provided reach of teaching resources in English. Moreover, we can access foreign teaching resources, and reference materials easily via Internet.

(Lecturer 4)

In general, lecturers and students are supported in a good condition of classrooms, materials, and teaching equipment. We have no complains about teaching materials.

(Lecturer 2)

5. Discussion

From the results obtained, it can be seen that lecturers in this study encountered the four major challenges in relation to students' low English proficiency, preparation time for lectures, engaging the class discussion and their own language difficulties.

The first major challenge, students' low English proficiency level, is consistent with what was found by many previous researchers (Haryanto, 2013; Floris, 2014). Specifically, lecturers reflected that students did not understand fully the lectures given in English. Moreover, students found difficult to understand terminology and science concepts in English. As a result, lecturers acknowledged that sometimes they had to switch their speech from English to Vietnamese when there were signs of insufficient understandings among students. In a similar line with Nha and Burns's research (2014) in which lecturers perceived difficulties in instructional interaction they reverted to Vietnamese. This finding is also supported by Haryanto (2013), who found that language switching happened frequently. It is obvious that students' low language competence implies that teachers have to adopt somehow different teaching strategies in comparison from those non-EMI classes.

Concerning preparation time, lecturers need more preparation time to master terminology and vocabulary of teaching the subjects in English. Consequently, to prepare teaching materials in English take longer time than in Vietnamese. This is consistent with what Vinke (1995), Vinke *et al.* (1998), Airey (2009), and Pilkinton-Pihko (2011) found in their research. They also pointed out that even for lecturers who are highly proficient in English need more preparation time to master terminology, technical vocabulary and "vocabulary of teaching" when teaching English-medium courses for the first time.

Regarding language ability, in this study several content lecturers experienced difficulty in using English, especially in "explaining terminologies and science concepts", also found to be a common issue for EMI teachers in many previous studies

(Vinke, 1995; Vinke et al., 1998; Tamtam et al., 2012; Nha & Burns, 2014). More importantly, the findings in this study stresses on the fact that lecturers' language level has a great impact on the ability to conducting EMI courses. In the present study, lecturers who are at advanced level experience the lower level of challenge than the ones who are at intermediate level. It means if content lecturers are proficient in English, teaching and learning process could be run effectively in terms of instruction and communication.

Although the results from the questionnaire shows that engaging the class discussion was not a considerable challenge to content lecturers, the results from the interview claimed that several interviewees encountered challenges in engaging the class discussion due to students' low English proficiency level. This is consistent with the findings of Yahaya *et al.* (2009) and Sanmugam and Harun (2013). In this study, lecturers commented that students had difficulty in asking questions and lacked activeness in classroom discussion. Moreover, the content lecturers found difficulty in getting students to response in class in English. Consequently, it is found that the teaching style becomes monologue and less interaction in EMI classrooms (Vinke, 1995; Klaassen, 2001; Airey & Linder, 2006).

In contradiction with earlier findings (Nha & Burns, 2014), we find that teaching resources is not a considerable challenge to content lecturers. The findings from the interview reveal that lecturers are supported with good facilities and they are satisfied with supplies of available teaching resources.

6. Concluding marks

The findings of this study strongly suggest that content lecturers' English proficiency is as important as students' English proficiency for the success of an EMI program. Therefore, language support could be provided for content lecturers to enhance their proficiency for an academic context. Such support could include taking English courses specifically oriented to academic teaching in a formal setting or engaging in informal opportunities, such as study tours in English-speaking countries, scholar exchanges, and travel grants for international conferences (Ball & Lindsay, 2012). More importantly, lecturers should have opportunities to share experiences of teaching and practices that work in their own contexts. A discussion forum could be set up or they could be supported to conduct collaborative action research (Burns, 2010) to explore pressing teaching issues in the EMI classroom.

The final implication involves reviewing student recruitment procedures. Adequate English entry requirements are necessary to enhance the benefits for enrolled students. According to Ashcraft (2006), to make sure that students have the

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) necessary to successfully undertake university studies, universities can make either a high-level of English proficiency a requirement for admission or have a strong language support program that is able to prepare students for their academic studies through English. Generally, there seems to be a gap between the English language requirements and the language proficiency needed for academic study. Therefore, for universities implementing this policy, the establishment of supplementary English courses and/or the selection of students qualified for English-medium instruction could be crucial tasks.

This study is to gain insights into lecturers' experiences and not to seek generalization. Thus, its contribution is to provide illustrations of various factors that could be taken up in future research studies. It is recommended that further studies be undertaken on larger scales combining different approach such as questionnaire, interview and observation. Further research can continue to an empirical study about students' perceptions of English-medium instruction, lecturers' perceptions of the pedagogical skills and knowledge that would strengthen their EMI practices and how to apply English-medium instruction most effectively. Such research could potentially assist EMI lecturers and policy-makers in other contexts to develop practical ideas for strengthening and supporting EMI programs.

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APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRE

Section II: Challenges in teaching EMI courses

For each of the following statement, please put a check √   in a box which best corresponds to your case (5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1= Strongly Disagree).

Abbreviation: EMI: English as a Medium of Instruction

(*Frequencies and **percentages included)

	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1.	I have difficulty in presenting and organizing the lesson content clearly and coherently in English.	0	*4 **14.3	0	18 64.3	6 21.4
2.	I find difficult to express myself effectively and correctly in lecturing in English.	1 3.6	4 14.3	2 7.1	17 60.7	4 14.3
3.	I have difficulty in expressing content knowledge in English because of my lack of vocabulary.	0	2 7.1	1 3.6	17 60.7	8 28.6
4.	I have difficulty in paraphrasing and explaining the lesson in different ways to help my students understand the lesson.	0	4 14.3	2 7.1	18 64.3	4 14.3
5.	Sometimes terminology and abstract concepts are difficult to explain in English.	0	12 42.9	3 10.7	12 42.9	1 3.6
6.	I sometimes have to struggle to arrange my sentences when I explain something in English.	1 3.6	9 32.1	2 7.1	11 39.3	5 17.9
7.	I have to pause to search for the right word when lecturing in English.	0	12 42.9	4 14.3	8 28.6	4 14.3
8.	I'm afraid of not using correct grammar when I speak.	0	0	4 14.3	19 67.9	5 17.9
9.	In English-medium instruction, I have difficulty in giving appropriate examples and supporting details to help students understand the lessons.	0	8 28.6	2 7.1	15 53.6	3 10.7
10.	In English I have to struggle with pronunciation, fluency and intonation.	0	11 39.3	4 14.3	11 39.3	2 7.1
11.	Lecturing in English hinders me from going deeper into the content of the lessons than in Vietnamese.	1 3.6	11 39.3	2 7.1	12 42.9	2 7.1
12.	The major difficulty I encounter in teaching EMI courses is students' low English proficiency.	2 7.1	17 60.7	3 10.7	6 21.4	0
13.	My students don't understand fully the content of the lecture given in English.	1 3.6	18 64.3	0	8 28.6	1 3.6
14.	My students don't understand my instructions and explanations in English.	0	5 17.9	6 21.4	14 50.0	3 10.7
15.	My students find difficult to understand terminology and	2	17	2	7	0

	science concepts in English.	7.1	60.7	7.1	25.0	
16.	Sometimes I have to switch my language from English to Vietnamese when students do not understand what I say.	1	16	2	5	4
		3.6	57.1	7.1	17.9	14.3
17.	My students don't participate actively in the classroom discussion due to their lack of proficiency in English.	0	6	2	19	1
			21.4	7.1	67.9	3.6
18.	My students avoid asking questions even when they don't understand my lessons.	0	8	3	13	4
			28.6	10.7	46.4	14.3
19.	I have difficulty in getting students to response in English	0	7	8	8	5
			25.0	28.6	28.6	17.9
20.	I need more preparation time to master terminology and vocabulary of teaching the subjects in English.	3	11	2	8	4
		10.7	39.3	7.1	28.6	14.3
21.	It takes longer time to prepare teaching materials in English than in Vietnamese.	0	8	13	5	2
			28.6	46.4	17.9	7.1
22.	I have to spend time to prepare vocabulary of teaching and instruction (e.g., for starting discussion and summing up information).	0	1	2	22	3
			3.6	7.1	78.6	10.7
23.	I have difficulty in accessing foreign teaching resources, and reference materials to prepare the lessons and examinations.	1	1	2	18	6
		3.6	3.6	7.1	64.3	21.4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.897	24

Item-Total Statistics

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1	61.8214	158.745	.691	.889	13	60.5357	160.110	.520	.892
2	61.5714	162.402	.453	.894	14	61.4286	162.847	.489	.893
3	62.0000	162.741	.591	.891	15	60.3929	161.210	.535	.892
4	61.6786	160.152	.645	.890	16	60.7143	160.508	.428	.895
5	60.9643	160.110	.547	.891	17	61.4286	164.624	.434	.894
6	61.2500	154.713	.624	.889	18	61.3571	155.497	.695	.888
7	61.0357	154.332	.687	.887	19	61.2857	157.989	.600	.890
8	61.9286	165.921	.603	.892	20	60.8571	159.979	.404	.896
9	61.3571	160.460	.521	.892	21	60.1786	160.967	.391	.896
10	61.0357	161.073	.492	.893	22	61.8571	168.794	.406	.895
11	61.0000	159.926	.488	.893	23	61.8571	163.979	.463	.893
12	60.3571	170.831	.146	.900	24	61.6429	171.349	.108	.901

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date: …………………………………

Interview began: ………………………

Actual duration: ………………minutes

Guided questions for interview

1. Do you face any difficulties in lecturing content knowledge in English? If yes, why?

2. Some lecturers agreed that "lecturing in English hinders them from going deeper into the content of the lessons than in Vietnamese". How do you think about that?

3. Do you think that students' low English proficiency causing difficulty for you in teaching process? If yes, why?

4. Do you have any difficulties in engaging the class discussion in English? If yes, why?

5. Do you have any difficulty in preparing the lecture for EMI classes? If yes, why?

6. Are there enough available teaching resources and material facilities to support your teaching work?

7. What other challenges do you have when you teach EMI courses?