

EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION CLASSES

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Received:	20/5/2023	There is no doubt that English is taught as an official subject at various levels of education in all four corners of the globe, particularly in non-English-speaking countries. It has also recently become the language of instruction in some Vietnamese universities. However, some challenges in English as a medium of instruction (EMI) classes have emerged that hinder the quality of teaching and learning and prevent an improvement in outcomes for students. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the difficulties associated with the implementation of EMI programs, with the participation of 280 students from various majors at a higher education institution in Vietnam. To collect quantitative and qualitative data, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews were used. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The study's findings revealed factors, including emotions, motivation, engagement with learning materials, and English language proficiency highlighted as a particular area of challenge. Finally, the implications of the research were presented to stakeholders (including students, lecturers, and administrators) to improve success in EMI classes.
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NHẬN THỨC CỦA SINH VIÊN VỀ NHỮNG THÁCH THỨC TRONG CÁC LỚP GIẢNG DẠY CÁC MÔN CHUYÊN NGÀNH BẰNG TIẾNG ANH

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài:	20/5/2023	Không còn nghi ngờ gì nữa, tiếng Anh được dạy như một môn học chính thức ở các cấp giáo dục khác nhau ở khắp nơi trên thế giới, đặc biệt ở các quốc gia không nói tiếng Anh. Tiếng Anh gần đây cũng đã trở thành ngôn ngữ giảng dạy tại một số trường đại học của Việt Nam. Tuy nhiên, một vài thách thức trong các lớp giảng dạy các môn chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh xuất hiện đã cản trở chất lượng dạy và học cũng như ngăn cản sự cải thiện kết quả học tập của sinh viên. Vì vậy, nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu những khó khăn khi thực hiện chương trình giảng dạy các môn chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh, với sự tham gia của 280 sinh viên đến từ nhiều chuyên ngành khác nhau tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu đã thu thập dữ liệu định lượng và định tính qua hình thức hỏi khảo sát và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Dữ liệu được phân tích sử dụng thống kê mô tả và phân tích nội dung. Nhìn chung, những kết quả của nghiên cứu đã tiết lộ các yếu tố bao gồm cảm xúc, động lực, sự tương tác với tài liệu học tập và trình độ tiếng Anh được xem là một thách thức đặc biệt. Cuối cùng, một vài đề xuất được đưa ra cho các bên liên quan (bao gồm sinh viên, giảng viên và quản lý), nhằm cải thiện sự thành công trong các lớp giảng dạy các môn chuyên ngành bằng tiếng Anh.
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1. Introduction

English plays an important role in a wide range of fields in which it is widely used as a medium of instruction in different contexts, and Vietnam is no exception. Galloway [1] indicates that EMI contributes to students' improvement of English language proficiency. Likewise, Tatzl [2] believes that thanks to the attendance of EMI classes, students' vocabulary range is significantly enriched. Furthermore, the study of Phuong et al. [3] revealed the benefits of taking EMI programs in terms of the provision of teaching and learning materials, the improvement of English language proficiency, and the possibility of job opportunities. Albeit the benefits of EMI programs are clarified to some extent, it is absorbed that the inevitable challenges still confront not only instructors but also students in EMI classes, which impact the success of the implementation of EMI programs in universities.

Numerous studies highlight the challenges encountered by instructors and students in the EMI classes. According to Tsou and Kao [4], EMI programs play a significant role in the internationalization of Asian universities, but their implementation poses challenges for both administrators and instructors. English proficiency significantly influenced the success of EMI programs, particularly students' lecture comprehension [5] - [7]. Additionally, Kojima et al. [8] discovered that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect students' performance in EMI courses. Students' knowledge acquisition and performance in the EMI program are also influenced by teachers, particularly their teaching strategies [9]. Although there has been a great deal of research on EMI, particularly on the challenges instructors encounter in the classroom, there has been little research on the challenges faced by students. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate EFL students' perceptions of the challenges towards English as a medium of instruction classes (EMI) at a higher institution in Vietnam. The study aims to address the following research question: What are EFL students' perceptions of the challenges in EMI classes at a higher education institution in Vietnam?

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research context and participants

This research was conducted at a higher education institution in Vietnam. The training programs of the institution consist of International Standard and Joint Programs. All subjects are taught in English by foreign and domestic lecturers who have graduated from prestigious universities around the world. All exams are administrated entirely in English. To satisfy the English language proficiency requirements, all first-year students must complete six credits of general English using the textbook "Four Corners" over the course of one academic year. In addition, they are supplemented with three credits of general English based on International English Language Testing (IELT) format, with the goal of achieving IELTS band scores of 5.5 prior to graduation.

A group of 280 EFL students, including 139 freshmen (49.6%), sophomores 49 (17.5%), juniors 83 (29.6%), and seniors 9 (3.2%), with different majors such as Technology Information, Banking Finance, Business Administration, Marketing, and Multimedia Communications, attending to both International Standard and Joint Programs at the institution, participated in the study. As for the gender aspect, the number of males was 177, while that of female students was 103, which accounted for 63.3% and 36.8%, respectively. With respect to time spent learning English, 54.6% of students reported spending approximately one hour per week studying English language, followed by 41.8% and 3.6% of those who spent one to three hours and more than three hours learning English. As for English use outside of class, nearly half of students (48.6%) reported using English outside of the classroom whether in social situations or engaging in online content. This percentage was slightly lower than the 51.4% of students who did not use English outside of the classroom.

2.2. Research instruments

A questionnaire was used to gather information for this study due to its mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) design. Firstly, the questionnaire was constructed in two parts: part

I focused on the participants' general information, and part II related to students' challenges in EMI classes, with 7 and 47 items, respectively. The responses include "5" for Strongly Agree (SA), '4' for Agree (A), '3' for Neutral (N), '2' for Disagree (D) and '1' for Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire's reliability was 0.95, which indicates that it was extremely reliable. As for the semi-structured interview, this was to investigate in depth the EFL students' perceptions of the challenges in EMI classes along with the questionnaire survey.

2.3. Procedures for data collection and analysis

For the data collection, in order to conduct the student questionnaire survey (Vietnamese version), a Google Form link was sent out to all students who are taking different majors and academic years at a higher education institution in Vietnam along with a detailed description of the research purposes and step-by-step guidance. It took them approximately 25 minutes to complete it. The interval score was interpreted as 1.00–1.80: strongly disagree; 1.81–2.60: disagree; 2.61–3.40: neutral; 3.41–4.20: agree; and 4.21–5.00: strongly agree. Regarding data analysis, descriptive statistics, including mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), were computed. From the semi-structured interview, qualitative data was collected and analyzed. The data were collected and translated for research purposes only. Interviewees were identified by the codes S1, S2, S3, S4,..., and S20.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Learner-related challenges

Learners' English proficiency

In terms of EFL students' perceptions of the challenges related to English proficiency, the questionnaire included 9 items. As shown in Table 1, it is evident that in general, the results of the study revealed that most EMI students agreed that using appropriate technical terms (item 7: M=4.14; SD = 0.74) and using correct grammar (item 3: M=4.03; SD = 0.77) were their challenges. Students found it difficult to answer the questions when being asked by the lecturers (item 9: M = 4.10; SD = 0.76) and understand technical terms from the teachers' utterance (item 1: M = 4.12; SD = 0.67). Students also admitted they had difficulty in dealing with technical terms stemming from course materials (item 2: M = 4.13; SD = 0.66) and asking the questions about unclear content (item 8: M= 4.21; SD = 0.71). Students also agreed that understanding what the teachers talked about during the lesson time, understanding the main content in textbooks, and reading textbooks effectively contributed to their challenges, with (item 4: M = 4.10; SD = 0.75), (item 6: M = 4.11; SD = 0.72), and (item 5: M = 4.06; SD = 0.77), respectively. Most interviewees also admitted that they found it difficult to understand the lessons and the content of textbooks due to their limited vocabulary. Their opinions are illustrated as follows: "*In terms of English skills, I understand the basics when the teacher speaks, but when reading textbooks, I, like many of my friends, frequently use Google Translate to translate into Vietnamese. Technical terms are a challenge for me in the learning process, and lecturers are aware of this issue, so they usually explain it thoroughly. I'm afraid to speak and come up with ideas because of my limited vocabulary. When I read the textbook in English, I get discouraged because there is so much new vocabulary.*" (S1); "*My current challenges in studying specialised subjects in English stem from the fact that I find technical terms to be much more difficult than normal English. Typically, I must read the textbook before attending class and my peers are experiencing the same issue. I find technical terms extremely difficult. If I simultaneously study specialised English and supplementary English, I find it extremely difficult in terms of time, exercises, and exams.*" (S5)

Table 1. *Learners' English proficiency*

No.	I have difficulty in...	N=280	
		M	SD
1	understanding of technical terms from the teachers' utterance.	4.12	0.67
2	dealing with technical terms from course materials.	4.13	0.66
3	using correct grammar.	4.03	0.77
4	understanding what the teachers talk about during the lessons.	4.10	0.75
5	reading textbooks effectively.	4.06	0.77
6	understanding the main content in textbooks.	4.11	0.72
7	using appropriate technical terms.	4.14	0.74
8	asking the questions about unclear content.	4.21	0.71
9	answering the questions asked by the lecturers.	4.10	0.76

Learners' emotions

As can be seen in Table 2, most EFL students agreed that they "[felt] anxious when speaking in an EMI classroom due to English ability" (item 10: M = 4.05; SD = 0.74), and they declared they were not confident when speaking due to their inaccurate pronunciation (item 11: M = 4.12; SD = 0.74). Furthermore, in terms of emotion, being anxious about whether other students understood their English or not (item 12: M = 4.13; SD = 0.71), feeling shy to ask the teachers what they were confused about during the lesson time (item 13: M = 4.08; SD = 0.74), and stressed when dealing with a wide range of technical terms in textbooks were their emotional challenges (item 15: M = 4.13; SD = 0.71). Additionally, most students agreed with the statement that they "felt bored because of the lack of interesting activities in EMI classes" (item 14: M = 4.10; SD = 0.71). Most interviewees said that emotional aspects significantly contributed to their attention span in EMI classes. For example, S2 stated: "*As for the emotional factor, if I speak English in front of the class, I'm afraid people won't understand what I mean. I'm afraid of mispronouncing words, using inappropriate words, and making grammatical mistakes. Sometimes, I'm afraid to ask the teacher again because I'm afraid I'm the only one who doesn't understand the problem.*" (S2). Likewise, S6 stated: "*I'm not confident enough to answer questions when being asked or share my opinions during class discussions due to a lack of vocabulary and pronunciation mistakes.*" (S6)

Table 2. *Learners' emotions*

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
10	I tend to feel anxious when speaking in an EMI classroom due to English ability.	4.05	0.74
11	I lack confidence when I speak due to my inaccurate pronunciation.	4.12	0.74
12	I tend to feel anxious about whether other students understand my English.	4.13	0.71
13	I'm quite shy about asking the teachers what I'm confused about during the lesson time.	4.08	0.74
14	I feel bored because the lack of interesting activities in EMI classes.	4.10	0.71
15	I feel stressed when dealing with a wide range of technical terms in textbooks.	4.13	0.71

*Learners' motivation***Table 3.** *Learners' motivation*

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
16	I am not motivated to improve English language skills.	4.16	0.72
17	I am not motivated to study subjects in English.	3.99	0.81
18	I cannot maintain the habit of reading English books.	3.93	0.80
19	I am unable to maintain my academic goals.	3.97	0.81
20	I do not get any encouragement from the teacher.	4.05	0.82
21	I do not get any support from friends.	4.00	0.81
22	I do not get any encouragement from my family.	3.92	0.76

As can be seen in Table 3, the majority of EMI students agreed with the challenges related to motivation, especially the two factors correlated to motivation to improve English skills (item 16: $M = 4.16$; $SD = 0.72$) and receiving encouragement and support from teachers and friends (item 20: $M = 4.05$; $SD = 0.82$; item 21: $M = 4.00$; $SD = 0.81$). Students also admitted that they found it difficult to maintain the habit of reading English books (item 18: $M = 3.93$; $SD = 0.80$).

3.1.2. Instructor-related challenges

With respect to instructor-related challenges, as can be seen in Table 4, the mean scores of EFL students' perceptions towards instructor-related challenges were very low, including instructors' English proficiency ($M = 3.23$; $SD = 0.56$), teaching techniques ($M = 3.26$; $SD = 0.62$), and instructors' attitudes ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 0.61$). This means that challenges most students had a positive view of the challenges associated with lecturers regarding English proficiency, teaching techniques, and attitudes.

Table 4. Instructor-related challenges

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
1	Instructors' English proficiency	3.32	0.56
2	Teaching techniques	3.26	0.62
3	Instructors' attitudes	3.22	0.61

Instructors' English proficiency

EFL students' perceptions toward the challenges related to instructors' English proficiency were very positive when they stated that their lecturers' English proficiency satisfied their expectations. This was indicated in Table 5 (with 5 items), in which the students' responses were absolutely opposite for 5 items, ranging from 23 to 27. Concerning the qualitative data collected from the interview, it was shown that all of the students who answered the interview questions agreed that the instructors' English proficiency is good in terms of speaking skills, vocabulary, and pronunciation. For instance, S14 reported: *"The learners' pronunciation is clear, using vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the students' level."* (S14) or S20 expressed: *"Lecturers often combine English and Vietnamese when teaching. They often try to use simple vocabulary so that students can easily grasp the lesson."* (S20).

Table 5. Instructors' English proficiency

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
23	Teachers are not good at communication skills.	3.16	0.81
24	Teachers present the lesson content unclearly in English.	3.22	0.77
25	Teachers find it difficult to deliver content knowledge in English because of a lack of technical terms.	3.19	0.79
26	Teachers use difficult grammars when delivering the lessons.	3.27	0.78
27	Teachers' pronunciation is unclear for me to understand.	3.30	0.78

Teaching techniques

Table 6 revealed that most students concerned about teaching techniques, such as "Teachers never used their mother tongue when explaining technical terms" (item 28: $M = 2.11$; $SD = 0.97$). Furthermore, students denied that their teachers provide them with much knowledge in each lesson and deliver lessons passively (item 30: $M = 2.49$; $SD = 1.04$; item 31: $M = 2.23$; $SD = 0.97$). Interestingly, the statistics for items 29 and 32 were exactly similar ($M = 2.21$; $SD = 1.03$), Teachers rarely gave appropriate examples to make the lessons clear" (item 29: $M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.82$) and "organized interactive activities," (item 32: $M = 3.20$; $SD = 0.48$) respectively. All students involved in the interview stated that the teaching methods and approaches used satisfied their needs: *"Regarding*

lecturers, they are very understanding of students and have good methods and attitudes, which makes me feel very satisfied.” (S3). Similarly, S14 indicated: “I like activities run by my lecturers because they help me be more engaged in lessons, contributing to my deep understanding of lessons.” (S14)

Table 6. Teaching techniques

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
28	Teachers never use mother tongue when explaining technical terms.	3.26	0.79
29	Teachers rarely give appropriate examples to make the lessons clearly.	3.27	0.82
30	Teachers provides an overload of knowledge in every lesson.	3.28	0.80
31	Teachers impart knowledge passively.	3.29	0.78
32	Teachers rarely organize interactive activities.	3.20	0.48

Instructors' attitudes

Regarding instructors' attitudes, the study utilized five items with a range of 33 to 37. All students who participated in the survey disagreed with the challenges related to lecturers' attitudes, as presented in Table 7. Firstly, items 33, 35, and 37 had very low mean scores, with M=3.25, 3.23, and 3.16, respectively. In addition, students denied that their teachers consistently exerted pressure on them (item 34: M = 3.19) and criticized their opinions in EMI classes (item 36: M = 3.25). Similarly, the interview data confirmed the survey result that EMI students were extremely satisfied with the way their teachers treated them. For instance, S16 indicated: “The lecturers are very enthusiastic, and I feel very satisfied with their teaching method, English skills, and attitude.” (16). Similarly, S20 reported: “Lecturers are willing to explain whatever I am confused about during lesson time and well interact with students in class, which makes me as well as my classmates feel at ease to learn.” (S20)

Table 7. Instructors' attitudes

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
33	Teachers rarely interact with students.	1.98	0.96
34	Teachers always put pressure on students.	2.10	1.03
35	Teachers do not motivate students.	1.91	0.92
36	Teachers often criticize students' opinions.	2.04	1.00
37	Teachers do not care about student expectations for the subject.	1.90	0.91

3.1.3. Learning material-related challenges

The content of learning materials

The statistics shown in Table 8 indicate that the content of learning materials also partially contributed to students' overall challenges.

Table 8. The content of learning materials

No.	I have difficulty in...	N=280	
		M	SD
38	comprehending scientific content as textbooks are in English.	4.06	0.75
39	understanding textbooks/course materials because of my limited technical terms.	4.06	0.70
40	following the textbook because of its logical design.	4.05	0.79
41	applying knowledge because the tasks in the textbooks are impractical.	3.95	0.75
42	applying knowledge because theoretical knowledge in textbooks outweighs practical knowledge.	4.00	0.77

This was manifested in items 38 and 39, as students agreed that they actually had difficulty comprehending scientific content presented in English textbooks and other materials due to the limit of technical terms, with M = 4.06; SD = 0.75; and M = 4.06; SD = 0.70, respectively. Besides, other elements related to textbook design (item 40: M = 4.05; SD = 0.79); tasks in

textbooks (item 41: $M = 3.95$; $SD = 0.75$); and the disparity of theoretical knowledge compared with practicality (item 42: $M = 4.00$; $SD = 0.77$) were significantly contributed to students' challenges in EMI classes. According to the result of the interview, most students agreed that the content of learning materials, particularly aspects of textbooks, had a strong impact on EFL students in EMI classes: *"The textbooks are too thick; there is so much information that I am sometimes unable to read them all. Also, the design of the curriculum and documents should be more visually appealing, with more illustrations and less theory."* (S1); *"I think too much theory makes me feel bored. Some textbooks, I feel, are different from what teachers teach in class."* (S17).

Lack of extra learning materials

According to the data presented in Table 9, the lack of additional learning materials, including the five items from 43 to 47 used to assess students' perceptions, contributed to their challenges in EMI classes. Students agreed that the learning materials lacked clear guidelines, assignments, and English references for subjects (item 43: $M = 3.92$; $SD = 0.83$; items 44: $M = 3.93$; $SD = 0.78$; and item 45: $M = 3.92$; $SD = 0.80$). In addition, the majority of students agreed that updated textbooks do not meet the needs of the subjects (item 46: $M = 3.95$; $SD = 0.83$). Notably, item 47 ($M = 3.99$; $SD = 0.83$) indicated that students actually agreed with the notion that EMI classes lack realistic simulations for each subject. In the interview, several students also shared their opinions about this problem: *"The textbook does not cover all of contents, so I must seek out additional information from other sources."* (S6); *"I found that the Institute's learning materials only provided me with basic knowledge and not more advanced knowledge."* (S12).

Table 9. Lack of extra learning materials

No.	Content	N=280	
		M	SD
43	Learning materials lack clear guidelines for each subject.	3.92	0.83
44	Practical assignments for the subjects are insufficient.	3.93	0.78
45	English references for each subject are insufficient.	3.92	0.80
46	The number of updated books has not met the needs of the subjects.	3.95	0.83
47	Realistic simulations for each subject are insufficient.	3.99	0.80

3.2. Discussion

In relation to the main variable named "learner-related challenges", all students agreed that learners' English proficiency was the first and foremost challenge faced by them. The challenges related to English proficiency may be explained by the fact that students indicated in the survey that their time and effort for studying English were insufficient, especially because of a lack of opportunities to practice English. Furthermore, students who enrolled in EMI programs have different levels of English proficiency; thus, students who do not meet the English requirement have to take an English entrance exam to be placed in suitable classes and were offered free English courses throughout the course. This result was supported by the studies of [7], [10], [11], in which students' English proficiency in terms of listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills plays an important role in helping them enter EMI programs. Secondly, learners' emotions were the second-highest figure, as many students agreed that they felt not confident when expressing ideas in class, resulting from their inaccurate vocabulary and pronunciation. The earlier studies conducted by [11] and [12] partially support this finding. Thirdly, the majority of students agreed with the challenges related to motivation, especially the two factors correlated to motivation to improving their English (language) skills and receiving encouragement and support from teachers and friends. This result is consistent with the studies of Kojima et al. [8], Kim et al. [9], and Madileng [13], which revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were two factors that impacted students taking an EMI course.

In terms of instructor-related challenges, most EMI students stated that the teachers were very good at English as they use it as a vehicle to impart knowledge effectively. This finding contrasts

with some of the previous studies, which found that students had difficulty understanding what teachers were saying due to their English proficiency, such as their four English language skills and pronunciation. For instance, the study by Rose et al. [10] revealed that EMI lecturers frequently lack high-level English language proficiency, including written and spoken English. Furthermore, with respect to teaching techniques, based on the data, all students expressed their positive perspectives towards how teachers deliver knowledge and how activities are run in EMI classes. This result differs from some published studies by Nha et al. [14] and Nhung [11], which discovered that the majority of EMI lecturers had challenges in teaching EIM programs due to their limited pedagogy skills and lack of appropriate training when starting EMI programs. Additionally, the statistics from the questionnaires, which were extremely low when it came to instructors' attitudes, indicated that students were completely satisfied with their teachers' attitudes, the data from the interviews confirmed the result in its entirety. This finding is consistent with studies by Nhung [11], Kurgat et al. [15], and Haruna et al. [16], who stated that lecturers' attitudes affected students, especially their academic achievements, and that students felt comfortable in EMI classes.

Regarding challenges related to learning materials, focus on two key components, namely "the content of learning materials" and "the lack of extra learning materials." The data collected from the survey and interviews showed that both had an impact on EMI students in EMI classes. This result is supported by the studies of Keuk et al. [17] and Hinkel [18]. Specifically, while the former indicated that students had difficulty understanding the contents of textbooks due to the abundance of technical terms, the latter showed that a lack of resources contributing to implementation's success in EMI classes.

4. Conclusion and implications

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of EFL students toward the challenges at a higher education institution in Vietnam. The findings reveal that most students ranging from freshmen to seniors participating in the EMI programs identified language proficiency, emotions, and motivations as their current challenges, in which their language skills, particularly dealing with a bundle of technical terms, are emphasized, except for the challenges stemming from lecturers. Additionally, learning materials, both the content and the lack of extra materials, were also one of the challenges that significantly affected students' learning processes in EMI classes. Moreover, the study also has pedagogical implications for lecturers, students, and administrators as follows. Regarding EMI instructors, they need to be aware of the challenges that EMI students face in EMI classes so that they may tailor their lessons to the students' strengths and weaknesses. They would be encouraged to use code switching, for instance, if students are having trouble understanding a particular part of the lecture. This could have positive consequences for students as they may feel less stressed, especially those with poor language skills. In other words, lecturers should be flexible in the use of the appropriate language when it comes to delivering content knowledge according to students' levels. When it comes to students, they must determine the most effective approach to their studies in order to develop their own interest and motivation. Essentially, English language proficiency is the major challenge affecting their emotions and motivation; consequently, they should seek effective learning strategies. It means that if their English language skills are enhanced, they will feel more at ease expressing their opinions and giving presentations in front of their classmates. In addition, they comprehend what instructors say in English without any difficulties. Independent learning is a key point that students should consider when studying at the tertiary level. As for administrators, students with low levels of English proficiency must first be screened in several different ways. For example, students who intend to join EMI programs should have to take entrance exams and meet English language requirements before they can be accepted. IELTS is an example of a standardized test that could be used to evaluate students' English skills. This is because its format has been employed in the institute's curriculum, requiring students to complete three credits of general English, which is

equivalent to IELTS band scores of 5.5. Those who are not yet comfortable communicating in English should take advantage of the institute's English foundation programs before enrolling in EMI classes. It is also important to tailor the textbooks and materials used in EMI courses to the level of students enrolled and the settings in which they are delivered.

In spite of the fact that this study was carefully conducted, there are also several limitations. Firstly, as this study was solely conducted at a higher institution with 280 EFL students who are currently taking EMI programs, this study is not necessarily generalizable to other contexts in Vietnam. Secondly, this study only focused on students' perceptions of challenges in EMI classes, so was no consideration of teachers' perceptions.

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