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First-year Students' Attitude Towards English as a Medium of Instruction: A Study on Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq

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Abstract

The educational system encounters a massive shift regarding the medium of instruction, as there is an excellent focus on employing the English language in various disciplines in higher education institutions. Hence, it is crucial to investigate the benefits and challenges that stakeholders, including teachers and students, might encounter. Although researchers conducted many studies investigating EMI, no previous study has been employed to investigate the first-year students' attitudes toward its' implementing in private universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. This study aimed to investigate first-year students' attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction and the challenges they encountered. The data collection was via a questionnaire and analyzed through SPSS. The research adopted a convenience sampling method. The research included 87 students in the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024 within two months. The questionnaire indicated different parts focusing on various aspects, such as students' attitudes towards the English language, the challenges they encounter during the implementation of EMI, the improved skills, and the benefits. The results displayed the courses' positive impact on students, including improving their skills, content knowledge, and vocabulary. This eventually reflected the optimistic attitude of the first-year students towards these courses. The results have some implications for the Ministry of Higher Education, such as providing intensive language courses for learners to support linguistic ability and high-quality learning.

Keywords: Attitudes, challenges, English as a medium of instruction, first-year, impact

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Introduction

Nowadays, the status of the English language has changed worldwide as it is the language of various sectors, such as tourism, business, medicine, and education (Karam, 2023). Educational institutions have adopted the English language for a variety of reasons. Being an international language is one of the most important reasons for employing the English language in educational institutions. However, institutions worldwide are directing their focus to internationalization. Hence, speaking English fluently is essential to becoming ahead of others in the globalized world (Aldawsari, 2022; Decorte et al., 2024). English language is not merely an academic subject but is also an instructional instrument in other academic disciplines worldwide. The status of English has changed from being a subject of study to a tool for teaching other academic subjects. Technically speaking, this phenomenon is known as English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI hereafter) to cover courses solely in English rather than using other languages (Blommaert, 2012). English as a medium of instruction is the application of the English language to teach academic topics where English is a foreign language (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012; Celik & Yildiz, 2019). It is common knowledge that internationalization procedures have recently crept into higher education establishments. Therefore, the first step in internationalizing universities can be implementing the English language as an educational tool (Borg, 2016).

The current study has multiple significances. Firstly, the primary purpose of using English is to prepare learners for the rapidly globalized world in general and educational and professional life in particular. In this regard, introducing this system is considered a means for expanded globalization (Celik & Kara, 2024). The trend is the same in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which is the context of the current study, as the majority of universities are adopting the English language in teaching. Kurdish is the official language in the region and the medium of instruction from primary to high school, whereas English is a minor focus. However, some authorities implemented English as the medium of instruction in higher education in various global-orientation disciplines, such as accounting, science, engineering, and mathematics (Chen et al., 2020). Secondly, the limited exposure to English during school years may cause some students to suffer from speaking anxiety. Hence, first-year students might face issues understanding and communicating in English. Borg (2016) pointed out that despite implementing EMI courses and using coursebooks written in English, some public institutions still instruct the courses in Kurdish or Arabic. This mismatch occurs due to a variety of challenges that both teachers and students face in the English-medium environment. The primary objective of this study is to get an insight into the first-year students' perceptions and the challenges they face when implementing EMI in their major. Therefore, the current study is focusing on identifying the main challenges faced by the first-year students during the implementation of EMI through the following research questions:

1. What are the first-year students' attitudes towards implementing EMI?
2. What are the main challenges encountered by the students in EMI courses at the tertiary level?

Literature Review

English as a medium of instruction, a new sample of progress in language strategy, represents the target language method, which holds that teaching only in the target language and avoiding switching back to the mother tongue is the optimal course of action. However, this viewpoint is very contentious. It raised several queries. One of the concerns is whether these courses focus on the subject content or the language only, or both simultaneously. Another concern to take into account which is how to provide a high-quality education to learners with linguistic and comprehension difficulties (Albalawi, 2024; Chen et al., 2020). These questions indicate that introducing English presents various challenges and barriers, including language-related issues and the motivation to learn the language. Therefore, many studies have investigated various aspects of EMI, including the reasons and consequences of implementing it and teachers' and students' perceptions.

Reasons behind the Implementation of EMI

Internationalization of universities is one of the factors behind the implementation of EMI, as universities are attempting to attain international status. Internationalizing higher education aims to foster intercultural and international competencies (IIC) and foreign language proficiency. Universities worldwide have used tactics like English-mediated instruction or teaching content subjects in English to accomplish this goal. EMI plays a crucial role in the development of English as a global language of communication, which has enhanced international student mobility in a process called internationalization (Corrales et al., 2016; Kara & Kucuk, 2023). These universities offer international programs and focus on applying English to their offered courses, which will eventually appeal to a more significant number of students from various parts of the world (Costa & Coleman, 2013). Blommaert (2012) has summarized the main motives behind implementing English in universities as three goals: appealing to more international students, elevating the university's prominence, and equipping the students for mobility and the globalized work marketplace.

Challenges Accompanied by the Implementation of EMI

Every story of EMI implementation is undoubtedly unique in that it includes a complex web of organizational, language, cultural, political, and other impacts. However, what's possibly more fascinating is how frequently certain aspects of those stories recur despite the complexity of the stories themselves.

Proficiency in the English language was one of the biggest obstacles in implementing this system, as the English language is different from the instructor's and the learner's first language. Therefore, this issue was heavily researched (Dearden, 2014). Teachers' insufficient linguistic ability requires time and personal effort to maintain English proficiency (reading, watching English-language movies, travelling, etc.). It also demands more work from non-native English teachers in developing lesson plans, creating and implementing evaluation instruments, and

creating classroom materials (Celik & Kara, 2024; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018). The limited linguistic proficiency has several repercussions, such as a decline in the breadth and depth of lecturers' clarifications, a decline in the ability to communicate clearly and rephrase, and a notable decrease in the range of terms that those non-native lecturers employ (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012). The situation is the same for the students without appropriate language competency. University students may struggle to develop the English language proficiency necessary for their field (Corrales et al., 2016). Lin and Morrison (2010) also pointed out that changing the medium of instruction at schools from English to Chinese had harmful repercussions on creating undergraduates with low L2 proficiency, and this consequently led to experiencing more language difficulties than their peers when it comes to group projects, content comprehension, reading instruction resources, writing projects, and classroom interactions. In addition to the mentioned challenges, Gröblinger (2017) has also pointed out more issues faced by both lecturers and learners, such as limitations in encouragement and concern in the language, instructors' reluctance to instruct in English, and the absence of subject matter specialists in particular areas who are willing and able to teach in English. Moreover, native teachers refuse to adjust to the demands of learners who are not native speakers of the English language. Furthermore, EMI poses a potential danger to native language and cultural identity. Finally, Dearden (2014) has pointed out issues related to organization, management, facilities, and funding shortages.

In general, the challenges of EMI implementation result from linguistic issues, a lack of motivation to teach and learn in the targeted language, difficulties in understanding native teachers, and insufficient funding and facilities to create an EMI environment.

Students' Perceptions Towards EMI

The extensive implementation of EMI in higher education has highlighted the importance of exploring learners' attitudes towards this system. Hence, a large number of scholars have investigated students' perceptions. By examining students' perceptions regarding a range of factors, such as English for education, English for occupations, English for globalization, conservation of tradition, both national and international identities, academic fulfillment and desire to migrate, Despitasari (2021) has shed light on EMI policy in a private higher education institution in the Indonesian context. This policy at the university receives excellent feedback from the participants in the study. Those participant view English as globally significant for their academic and professional endeavors. They don't perceive English as a danger to the survival of the Indonesian language and culture. They are even considering moving overseas to a different nation for a more stable living and work environment. They find this policy's execution in their institution to be generally satisfactory.

Kırkgöz (2014) has conducted a study investigating students' perceptions. This study indicated two groups. In one group, Turkish was the medium of instruction, which is the mother language of the participants, while for the other group, English was the medium of instruction. The study included a questionnaire, interviews, and an analysis of exam papers. The findings revealed that being instructed in English helped them improve their linguistic skill regarding vocabulary

and translation. Moreover, the students had positive visualizations regarding EMI, which they predicted would allow them to get well-paid jobs. However, they had some challenges regarding understanding the disciplinary topics, and this eventually led to choose memorization merely to pass their exams. The memorization technique has a negative outcome, as the students will quickly forget the memorized information, emphasizing the shallow and incomplete learning of disciplinary knowledge. When it comes to the other group that used the Turkish language, the students showed more satisfaction and complete comprehension of the major-related knowledge of using Turkish by the teachers. On the other hand, those students expressed experiencing issues, such as difficulty comprehending any source in English and their fears regarding job opportunities that require knowledge and competence in the English language. These issues reflect the importance of EMI in higher education institutions.

Moncada Comas (2022) has investigated Catalan university students' attitudes towards EMI. Although instruction in this university was in Catalan or Spanish, the learners' mother tongue, English, was recently adopted as the medium of instruction. In this study, there was a focus on four aspects, including investigating students' attitudes towards the variance in being instructed in English and L1, multilingual behavior adopted in the classrooms by lecturers as well as students, students' attitudes towards their own and their peers' performance and linguistic competence, and the English language teaching and learning events. The results of the log questions regarding learners have shown that students were satisfied with being instructed in English as they consider themselves competent in the language. However, they referred to their peers' English as insufficient, eventually impeding their comprehension and pushing them to use L1. Regarding improving their linguistic ability, students agreed that EMI courses helped them have more exposure to the language, improve their skills, and discover various vocabulary. Finally, students also indicated a tendency towards multilingual strategies when meaning is unclear in English, so there will be a need to switch to L1.

On the other hand, the results of the study conducted by Kim et al. (2017) were opposite to previous studies, as the students showed dissatisfaction with the adoption of EMI and excellent preference for Korean. The lack of exposure to English can be the reason for the preference for KMI. Moreover, the students pointed out that reforming the school policy to make the English language compulsory would eventually make learning English more accessible.

Finally, a study conducted by Aldawsari (2022) at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia investigated both instructors' and learners' attitudes towards EMI. The results showed a positive perception of EMI from both parties. However, the learners showed more preference for code-switching, including the use of L1, which was due to their incompetence in the language. Moreover, those learners reflected their satisfaction with their L1 as well as their own culture.

To sum up, the students' attitudes were varied. Some have seen the implementation of EMI as beneficial for their social and professional lives. On the other hand, others have suffered and

considered learning in English to lead to shallow learning due to their incompetent linguistic abilities.

Method

Research Design

This quantitative study aimed to investigate first-year students' perceptions of EMI at Tishk International University and determine any challenges they face while learning English. Collecting the data was via a questionnaire based on (Zhang & Pladevall-Ballester, 2022) with some modifications to attain statistical data from the participants to achieve the aim of this study eventually. The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data.

Participants

This study was conducted at Tishk International University in Erbil, Iraq, in the 2023-2024 academic year. The participants for this study were selected using a convenient sampling method. A total of 87 first-year undergraduate students took part in the survey. The number of female (N=55) students exceeded their male (N=32) friends. Their ages ranged from 17 to 29. Their nationalities were Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish and Assyrian. The participants' English proficiency level was moderate, so they were required to take a Foundation English course to sharpen their English throughout the year as a non-technical elective course. The participants belonged to different faculties and departments, including interior design, pharmacy, information technology, civil engineering, computer engineering, business administration**,** dentistry, and architecture. The personal details related to the participants are all listed in Table One :

Table 1. *Participants' personal information summary*

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	32	37%
Female	55	63%
Total	87	100.00
Faculty		
Interior Design	19	22%
Pharmacy	24	28%
Information Technology	13	15%
Civil Engineering	7	8%
Business Admin.	1	1%
Dentistry	20	23%
Architecture	3	3%
Total	87	100%

Apart from demographic details, participants' departments are visualized in Figure One.

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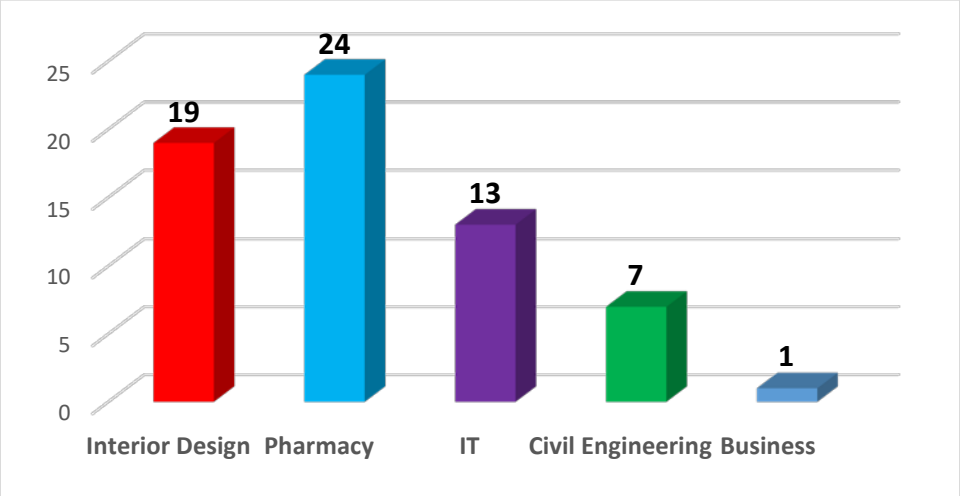


Figure 1. Distribution of students by departments

As Figure One shows, pharmacy (N=24) students led other departments. In other words, pharmacy students were followed by interior design (N=19), IT (N=13), civil engineering (N=7) and business (N=1) with varying figures. Students' inclination to allocate time for speaking practice per week is illustrated in Figure Two.

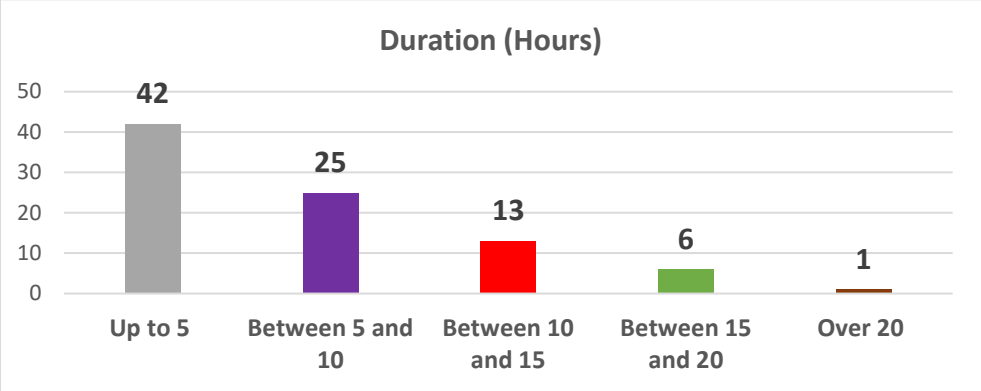


Figure 2. Weekly speaking practice

According to Figure 2, nearly half of the students developed a routine to speak English for up to 5 (N=42) hours per week. This was followed by five to 10 (N=25) and 10 to 15 (N=13) hours. After that, the number of students who studied for 15 hours or more was lower than in other categories.

Findings

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate first-year students' perceptions towards EMI at the university level and any challenges they encounter. Data collection was via a questionnaire adapted from Aldawsari's (2022) scale on EMI. The participants were 87 first-year undergraduate students, 55 females and 32 male students, majoring in different departments at Tishk International University in Erbil. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic

questions about the participants, as well as questions about the language skills they are competent in and the approximate number of hours they spend practising these skills every day. Table Two describes these two variables.

Table 2. *Participant's favourite skill and spending hours*

Skills	Number	Percentage
Speaking	24	28%
Listening	30	35%
Reading	23	26%
Writing	10	11%
Total	87	100%

The second part of the questionnaire included four main domains. These domains focused on student's attitudes toward the English language, challenges in EMI; skills improved through EMI courses, and the benefits of EMI.

The first domain of the questionnaire investigated attitudes towards the English language. Table Three below summarizes the participants' answers for each item.

Table 3. *Attitudes Towards English Language*

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
EMI improved my English proficiency.	3.82	12.7%	11	9.2%	8	12.7 %	11	13.7%	12	51.7%	45
I will enrol in the EMI course even if it is not required.	3.82	18.4%	16	7%	6	5.7 %	5	11.5 %	10	57.4%	50
I am interested in learning English.	4.03	9.2 %	8	3.4 %	3	16.1%	14	17.3%	15	54 %	47
The content of the course drew my attention.	3.93	9.2 %	8	12.6 %	11	4.6%	4	23%	20	50.6%	44
The lessons were fun.	4.12	5.7%	5	4.6 %	4	10.3%	9	30%	26	49.4%	43
I have a positive attitude toward EMI.	4.05	9.2%	8	6.9 %	6	5.7%	5	25.3%	22	52.9%	46

The first domain in the questionnaire was associated with the attitudes towards the English language. Students responses were positive regarding statement (1), which was related to the effect of EMI on their language proficiency. The table shows that (51.7%) strongly agreed and (13.7%) of the participants agreed with the statements. Also, (12.7%) of the responses were neutral, indicating the participants' satisfaction with the impact of these courses on their English proficiency. On the other hand, (9.2%) disagreed and (12.7%) strongly disasagreed with the role of this system in the progress of language proficiency.

Statement (2) was related to enrolling in EMI courses even if they were not required. A big percentage (57.4%) strongly agreed and (11.5%) agreed with enrolling in these courses in case they were not obligatory. (5.7%) of the respondents stayed neutral. While (7%) disagreed (18.4%) strongly dissagreed regarding enrollment in these courses if they were optional.

The respondents showed a significant agreement with statement (3), which is related to being interested in learning the English language. The results were highly significant, as (54%) strongy agreed and (17.3)% of the respondents agreed on their interest to learning in English. While (16.1%) of the participants stayed neutral regarding being interested in learning in English. Only (3.4%) disagreed and (9.2%) strongly disagreed with this statement. The results eventually reflects the participants positive attitude towards EMI.

The fourth statement was related to the content of the course and how the learners perceive it. A significant percentage (50.6%) strongly agreed and (23%) agreed that they were interested in the content of the course, which reflects the constructive impact of the EMI. (4.6%) of the respondents stayed neutral. Whearas (12.6%) disageed and (9.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

As for the fifth statement, (49.4%) strongly agreed and (30%) agreed that the lessons of EMI were entertaining, indicating a constructive opinion towards the EMI lessons. (10.3%) of the respondents stayed neutral. A small percentage (4.6%) disagreed (5.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Statement (6) resulted in positive attitude to EMI, as (52.9%) strongly agreed and (25.3%) agreed. Also, a small percentage, (5.7%), stayed neutral. Wheras, (6.9) disagreed and (9.2%) strongly disagreed with this statement. The participants significantly showed a high attitude towards the EMI courses.

When measuring the benefits of these courses for the participants, the results were as elaborated in Table Four below:

Table 4. *Benefits of EMI*

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I feel I know more content-related vocabulary by learning the subject through English.	4.01	8%	7	10.3%	9	7%	6	21.9%	19	52.8%	46
I feel I improved my subject knowledge by learning the subject through English.	4.08	8%	7	6.9%	6	4.6%	4	29.9%	26	50.6%	44

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Statement (7) results, which is related to the role of EMI in improving the content-related vocabulary, showed that (52.8%) strongly agreed and (21.9%) agreed with this statement. While (7%) of the respondents stayed neutral. On the other hand, (10.3%) disagreed and (8%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

As for statement (8), the results showed that (50.6%) strongly agreed and (29.9%) agreed that EMI improved the respondents' subject knowledge. While (4.6%) stayed neutral. Whereas, (6.9%) disagreed and (8%) strongly disagreed, stating they have not advanced their knowledge in English, including the vocabulary.

One of the crucial domains to examine was the effect of EMI courses on the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The results reflected the positive impact of these courses on the development of the four skills in general. However, the results varied for each skill as shown in Table Five:

Table 5. *Improved skills via EMI*

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
My speaking skills have improved by learning the subject through English.	3.73	10.3%	9	18.4%	16	4.6%	4	20.7%	18	46%	40
I feel my listening skills have improved by learning the subject through English.	4.12	5.7%	5	9.2%	8	3.4%	3	29.9%	26	51.8%	45
I feel my reading skills have improved by learning the subject through English.	3.91	10.3%	9	8%	7	8%	7	26.6%	23	47.1%	41
I feel my writing skills have improved by learning the subject through English.	3.86	11.4%	10	12.6%	11	2.4%	2	25.2%	22	48.4%	42

Speaking skills results showed that (46%) strongly agreed and (20.7%) agreed that they improved their speaking skills through EMI. While (4.6%) stayed neutral. On the other hand, (18.4%) disagreed, and (10.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement.,

As for listening skills, (51.8%) strongly agreed and (29.9%) agreed about the positive role of EMI on improving the respondents' listening skills. (3.4%) stayed neutral. While (9.2%) disagreed and (5.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Regarding reading skills, (47.1%) strongly agreed and (26.6%) agreed that EMI improved the reading skills. (8%) stayed neutral. Whereas only (8%) disagreed and (10.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

The results for writing skills were as the following: (48.4%) strongly agreed and (25.2%) agreed with the impact of EMI on the writing skills improvement. While (2.4%) stayed neutral. On the other hand, (12.6%) disagreed and (11.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement

Given these points, the results displayed a positive attitude towards improving the four skills in general. The highest percentage, however, was in listening skills, which resulted from the extensive exposure to the English language within and outside the classroom.

Another important aspect to inspect was the challenges those learners might encounter during the implementation of EMI. The results displayed that EMI did not constitute any obstacle to understanding the content of the course. Moreover, the respondents had sufficient English to join these courses; hence, they were fine with comprehending and interacting in the classes as shown in Table Six below:

Table 6. *Challenges encountered in EMI*

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I prefer to learn the content through English compared to Kurdish or Arabic	4.12	5.7%	5	11.5%	10	3.5%	3	23%	20	56.3%	49
It was easy to understand specific terminology via EMI	4.06	11.5%	10	5.7%	5	5.7%	5	18.4%	16	58.7%	51
I felt my English was very good for the EMI course.	4.06	4.6%	4	11.5%	10	11.5%	10	17.2%	15	55.2%	48

As for statement (13), (56.3%) strongly agreed, and (23%) agreed and preferred to learn in English compared to Kurdish and Arabic, which are the participants' mother tongues. (3.5%) of the respondents stayed neutral. On the other hand, (11.5%) disagreed, and (5.7%) strongly disagreed, indicating their disagreement towards preferring English over Kurdish and Arabic.

Statement (14) which is related to the ease in understanding specific terminology in English (58.7%) strongly agreed, and (18.4%) agreed with the statement. (5.7%) stayed neutral. On the other hand, (5.7%) disagreed, and (11.5%) strongly disagreed.

Finally, statement (15) was related to the participants' English ability, in which (55.2%) strongly agreed and (17.2%) agreed that their English language was sufficient to join these courses.

While (11.5%) stayed neutral. Whereas (11.5%) disagreed and (4.6%) strongly disagreed, which reflects having insufficient English due to their limited exposure to the English language. In general, the results showed that the participants did not encounter any challenges during the implementation of English as a language of instruction.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate first-year students' perceptions regarding EMI and address the challenges they might encounter while implementing the English language as a tool for teaching and learning. The study indicated five main domains. The first domain was related to the learners' attitude towards EMI. The current study's results reflected these courses' positive impact on improving their linguistic competency. This result ties nicely with the previous study by Huang (2015), which displayed the significance of these courses in improving the learners' language proficiency. Also, the results showed that the respondents enrolled in these courses willingly. Unlike the current study, a study conducted by Yeh (2014) showed that the students enrolled in EMI courses either because they were obliged or for having no other option. The results also demonstrated the students' willingness to learn the English language. A study by Costa and Coleman (2013) also confirmed that the respondents expressed a desire to learn English. Moreover, the findings confirmed the participants' interest in the content of the courses. Similar to previous studies, results by Iwaniec & Wang (2023) showed the students' motivation to learn in EMI courses as it offers the potential for better job opportunities, as well as better interaction in international contexts. Moreover, these English courses offered them enhanced content learning as it improved their content-related vocabulary, eventually encouraging them to be more into these courses. The participants indicated their positive attitude to these courses as they were entertaining. This result was in line with a study by Doiz and Lasagabaster (2018) in which the respondents enjoyed the videos watched during EMI lessons. Finally, the participants confirmed their positive attitude towards these courses in general. Previous studies by (Aldawsari, 2022; Despitasari, 2021) have demonstrated similar results in line with the current study.

The study demonstrated the beneficial role of these courses on developing both content-related vocabulary and disciplinary knowledge of the participants. Similar findings were available in a study conducted by Chen et al. (2020) in which the participants improved regarding their vocabulary related to academia and their discipline. All in all, the results revealed that the participants were satisfied with taking these courses because they significantly improved their knowledge and vocabulary in English.

According to the current results, the participants confirmed their development in the four skills. However, the most remarkable development was in listening skills, which resulted from the English environment inside the university that eventually reflected extensive exposure to the English language. This result was similar to another study by Kim et al. (2017), which also reflected the progress in the listening skills of the respondents during the EMI courses. The findings indicated that the respondents encountered no difficulties while implementing these

courses. The respondents reflected their willingness to learn through English, preferring it over their mother tongue. In line with the current study, one of the groups of a study by Zhang & Pladevall-Ballester (2022) displayed their preference to learn in English over Chinese, as there will be a great need and usage for the English language in their practical life in the future. Moreover, the results reflected that the implementation of English in the classrooms did not impede the comprehension of the content-related terminologies. Unlike the current study, some previous studies, such as (Costa, 2017; Corrales et al., 2016), affirmed that the implementation of English constituted an obstacle to learning specific terminology and the learners confronted significant linguistic issues. Finally, the results showed that the students have sufficient language ability that qualifies them to join these courses which resulted from the admission process followed by the university, as the students must take a proficiency exam to find out about their linguistic ability. Otherwise, the students with low English competency must join specific courses to prepare them to enter their departments. This finding contradicts previous studies (Borg; 2016; Jiang et al., 2019), which have suggested that the learners' language proficiency was insufficient for the EMI courses.

Conclusion

This study investigates first-year students' attitudes towards the EMI courses. Data collection was via a questionnaire. This study involved first-year students at Tishk International University majoring in different departments and faculties. The questionnaire indicated five main domains, including attitudes towards EMI, benefits of EMI, skills that improved throughout these courses, and the challenges that the students faced during the courses. The study's findings displayed the students' positive attitude towards the EMI courses. The findings reflected the constructive and beneficial impact of these courses on various aspects, including the level of language proficiency, vocabulary, content knowledge, and entertainment during these courses. In addition, the findings were also optimistic regarding the four skills. However, the participants' listening skills showed a significant improvement through the implementation of these courses, which is the result of the extensive exposure to the language, as it is the language of communication between the participants and the lecturers. Moreover, the implementation of EMI showed that the learners faced no challenges.

This study suggests several pedagogical implications for those teachers who teach EMI courses. The implications can be to improve their language competency and content knowledge in English to get over their language barrier and to be able to deliver their lectures in depth. Also, this study allows teachers to support their learners with incompetent linguistic ability by providing them with various resources that help them improve their language and comprehend the content in English.

The limitation of the current study is that it mainly focused on the first-year students' attitudes; hence, further studies can investigate students of more advanced levels to get more

accurate results and to find out whether they have faced any challenges during the implementation of EMI courses.

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