

## **Analysis of the Need for English as the Medium of Instruction: A Case Study at MTS Istiqlal**

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### ***Abstract***

This study investigates the need for English as the medium of instruction (EMI) at MTS Istiqlal, focusing on teachers' English language proficiency, their challenges, and the perceptions surrounding the use of English in the classroom. A qualitative needs analysis was conducted with 20 teachers from MTS Istiqlal, using a survey and semi-structured interviews to assess their language proficiency, confidence in using English, and their perceived needs for improvement. The survey results revealed significant gaps in teachers' confidence, particularly in speaking and explaining subject content in English. A majority of teachers expressed a strong desire for professional development, particularly in speaking, listening, and pedagogical strategies for integrating English into their teaching. The findings suggest the importance of a structured language training program, incorporating both formal instruction and informal practice opportunities, to support teachers in becoming more confident and effective in using English as the medium of instruction. The study highlights the need for tailored professional development programs that address the diverse educational backgrounds and teaching experiences of the teacher, with the ultimate aim of improving teaching quality and supporting the use of English in the classroom.

**Keywords:** *ESL, classroom instruction, Need analysis*

## **INTRODUCTION**

English has become one of the most important international languages, playing a significant role in various aspects of life, including education (Puspitasari & Ishak, 2023). In Indonesia's education context, English is not only taught as a separate subject but also as a tool for communication in teaching other subjects (Widayani et al., 2024). This phenomenon has grown in line with globalization and the increasing need to prepare the younger generation to compete internationally. Therefore, the English proficiency of teachers is a key factor in enhancing the quality of teaching in schools (Sakinah, 2023).

However, in some schools, especially at the madrasah level, the use of English as the medium of instruction remains limited. This may be due to various factors, such as the varying levels of English proficiency among teachers, diverse educational backgrounds, and the lack of training or opportunities to improve English skills for teaching purposes (Rifiyanti & Dewi, 2023). In this regard, it is crucial to understand the specific English needs of teachers to ensure they can teach effectively, both in terms of language use and communication with students and colleagues (Nur et al., 2023).

Research on EMI has grown rapidly in recent years. A study by (Anggraini, 2023) highlights that EMI enhances language skills, global readiness, and direct access to academic resources, but also acknowledges linguistic challenges and the need for teacher competence. Another study in Vietnam Huy et al., (2021) revealed differences in students' attitudes toward EMI based on their academic backgrounds (natural sciences vs. social sciences) as well as various challenges they faced. Additionally, a recent study (Dung, 2024) highlights that implementing EMI in Vietnamese universities faces resource constraints, faculty workload issues, and student language barriers but also identifies significant benefits, such as increased international publications and higher employment rates for EMI graduates. A study conducted in Bangladesh (Roshid & Sultana, 2024) found that while parents value EMI for its perceived instrumental benefits, their expectations are often unmet due to teachers' limited English proficiency and the lack of an immersive English-speaking environment in schools. Finally, a study in Iraq (Karam, 2024) demonstrated the positive impact of EMI courses on students, including improved skills, content knowledge, and vocabulary.

Although previous research has provided valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of EMI, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. Most studies have focused on higher education or urban settings, while the implementation of EMI at the junior high school level, particularly in madrasahs, has received less attention. In fact, madrasahs have unique characteristics and challenges that require a specialized approach. Furthermore, the specific needs of teacher professional development to support EMI in madrasahs have rarely been explored in depth.

This study aims to fill these gaps by analyzing the needs related to the use of English as a medium of instruction at MTS Istiqlal. The primary focus of this research is on the factors influencing teachers' ability to effectively use English in the teaching and learning process.

This study offers several novelties. First, it explores a rarely studied context—madrasahs (MTS Istiqlal)—providing new insights into EMI implementation in this setting. Second, a qualitative needs analysis approach is employed to identify the specific challenges and requirements for teacher professional development, which have not been widely examined in previous research. Third, this study contributes not only theoretically but also practically by offering contextual recommendations to enhance the implementation of EMI at MTS Istiqlal.

The importance of English proficiency among teachers, especially as the medium of instruction in the learning process, provides the foundation for this research to explore how teachers can become more confident in using English in the context of teaching. As stated by Puspitasari & Ishak (2023), building teacher confidence in English is crucial in improving their teaching effectiveness. This study also aims to provide recommendations for training policies or support needed to enhance teachers' English skills, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of teaching at MTS Istiqlal (Rifiyanti & Dewi, 2023).

In conclusion, this study will address the following questions:

1. To what extent is the English proficiency level of teachers at MTS Istiqlal?
2. What challenges do teachers face in using English as a medium of instruction in the classroom?
3. What professional development needs do teachers perceive to support the use of English as a medium of instruction?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative approach to assess the English language needs of teachers at MTS Istiqlal, with a specific focus on their perceptions and the challenges they face in using English as the medium of instruction. The research design is based on a needs analysis model, which is a common approach in educational research to identify the skills and knowledge required by teachers to improve their teaching practices.

The participants in this study are teachers at MTS Istiqlal, who teach various subjects and have diverse educational backgrounds. A total of 20 teachers were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that ensures participants are relevant to the study's objectives. The teachers were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study and their current engagement in teaching subjects in which English may or may not be used as the medium of instruction. The teachers' backgrounds and subject areas vary, reflecting the diversity of the subjects taught at MTS Istiqlal.

To gather data, a survey was administered to the selected participants. The survey was designed to assess the teachers' proficiency in English, their confidence in using English for teaching, and their perceptions of the need for English as the medium of instruction. The survey consisted of 15 statements, which participants rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the general trends and needs related to English language proficiency among the teachers. The Likert scale responses were quantified, with scores ranging from 1 to 5 for each statement. The data were then analyzed to determine:

1. The overall confidence levels of teachers in using English as a medium of instruction.
2. The perceived gaps in language skills, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English.
3. The areas where teachers expressed the greatest need for improvement in English proficiency.

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 teachers from the survey sample. The interviews aimed to provide deeper insights into the specific challenges teachers face when using English in the classroom and their suggestions for professional development. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed thematically to complement the quantitative survey results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

*Table. 1. Result Table*

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Range
Self-confidence in Speaking English	2.8	1.2	1 – 5
Ability to Explain Subject Content	3.2	1.0	2 – 4
Ability to Respond to Students' Questions	2.9	1.1	1 – 5
Perceived Need for Improving Speaking Skills	4.5	0.6	3 – 5
Understanding Spoken English	4.0	0.8	3 – 5

The results of the survey and interviews provide valuable insights into the teachers' English language proficiency and their perceptions of using English as a medium of instruction at MTS Istiqlal. The survey responses, collected from 15 teachers, revealed the following key trends:

#### **1. Self-confidence in Speaking English:**

Mean: 2.8

Standard Deviation (SD): 1.2

Range: 1 – 5

The majority of teachers (60%) reported a low level of confidence in speaking English during lessons, with an average rating of 2.8. The standard deviation of 1.2 indicates a moderate spread in responses, suggesting that while some teachers feel strongly unconfident (rating of 1), others feel somewhat confident (rating of 4-5). This range highlights the variability in teachers' self-assessment of their English-speaking abilities.

*Analysis:* This low level of confidence poses a significant challenge to effective EMI implementation. Teacher confidence in speaking is crucial as it directly impacts their ability to convey subject matter clearly and respond to student questions spontaneously. The variability in confidence levels also suggests that training and support approaches need to be tailored to meet the individual needs of teachers.

## **2. Ability to Explain Subject Content in English:**

Mean: 3.2

Standard Deviation (SD): 1.0

Range: 2 – 4

A significant number of teachers (53%) expressed concerns about their ability to effectively explain subject content in English, with an average rating of 3.2. The standard deviation of 1.0 suggests that most responses were clustered around the middle of the Likert scale, but with a slight tendency towards lower confidence. The range from 2 to 4 indicates that while some teachers feel capable of explaining basic concepts in English, there are still concerns about more complex topics.

*Analysis:* The ability to explain subject content in English is essential to ensure that students understand key concepts. The concerns expressed by teachers indicate a need for more focused training on the use of technical and academic English relevant to their subjects. This may also indicate that teachers require support in developing effective teaching strategies for delivering complex subject matter in English.

## **3. Ability to Respond to Students' Questions in English:**

Mean: 2.9

Standard Deviation (SD): 1.1

Range: 1 – 5

Teachers had mixed responses regarding their ability to answer students' questions in English. Approximately 47% reported moderate confidence (rating of 3), and 33% felt less confident (rating of 2). The mean score of 2.9, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.1, suggests a relatively wide range of confidence levels. While some teachers feel comfortable responding to students' questions (rating of 4-5), a significant portion still struggles with this task (rating of 1-2), reflecting the need for further language development in real-life communication scenarios.

*Analysis:* The ability to respond to student questions effectively in English is critical to creating an interactive and supportive learning environment. These results suggest that teachers need more opportunities to practice responding to student questions spontaneously, as well as training in effective communication strategies to overcome language difficulties. This lack of confidence could be due to teachers' lack of preparation in facing unexpected questions.

#### **4. Perceived Need for Improving English-speaking Skills:**

Mean: 4.5

Standard Deviation (SD): 0.6

Range: 3 – 5

A strong majority (80%) of teachers agreed that improving their English-speaking skills was essential for more effective teaching. The average rating for this statement was 4.5, with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.6. This indicates a high consensus among teachers about the importance of improving their speaking skills, with most responses clustered near the higher end of the Likert scale (4-5). The range of 3 to 5 suggests that while nearly all teachers recognize the need for improvement, a small number may still feel less urgent about this need.

*Analysis:* The high awareness of the need to improve English-speaking skills suggests that teachers are motivated to participate in professional development programs. This provides a solid foundation for designing and implementing effective interventions to enhance teachers' English-speaking abilities.

#### **5. Understanding Spoken English:**

Mean: 4.0

Standard Deviation (SD): 0.8

Range: 3 – 5

The results showed that 60% of teachers felt confident in understanding spoken English, such as audio or video materials, with an average rating of 4.0. The standard deviation of 0.8 suggests that most teachers have a relatively high level of confidence in understanding spoken English, but some still feel they need more practice, especially with more complex materials. The range from 3 to 5 reflects the diversity in teachers' listening comprehension abilities.

*Analysis:* Teachers' ability to understand spoken English is a valuable asset, which can help teachers find relevant resource materials to teach to students.

#### **6. Confidence in Reading and Writing in English:**

Mean: 3.7

Standard Deviation (SD): 1.0

Range: 2 – 5

While many teachers (67%) felt confident reading and writing in English for teaching purposes, their ratings were slightly lower for writing instructional materials and providing feedback to students. The average rating for this area was 3.7, with a standard deviation of 1.0, indicating a moderate spread in responses. The range from 2 to 5 shows that while most teachers feel comfortable with reading and writing in English, there are still notable challenges, especially when it comes to producing and providing written feedback in English.

*Analysis:* This result indicates that teachers need to improve their writing skills in English, one way is to provide training in making interesting teaching materials in English.

#### **7. Interest in Further English Language Training:**

Mean: 4.3

Standard Deviation (SD): 0.7

Range: 3 – 5

A significant portion of the teachers (87%) expressed a strong interest in further English language training, particularly focusing on speaking and writing skills. The mean score of 4.3, with a low standard deviation of 0.7, indicates that most teachers are eager to improve their language skills. The range from 3 to 5 shows that while the majority are strongly interested in training, there are still a few who may not feel as urgent about additional training.

*Analysis:* With teachers' high interest in English language training, the school can hold English language training by partnering with an English language training provider.

### **8. Desire for Informal Opportunities to Practice English:**

Mean: 4.2

Standard Deviation (SD): 0.8

Range: 3 – 5

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that they would benefit from informal opportunities to practice English. The average rating for this item was 4.2, with a standard deviation of 0.8. The range from 3 to 5 indicates that the majority of teachers are interested in informal practice, but there is some variation in the level of enthusiasm.

*Analysis:* Teachers urgently need a forum or community to develop their English language skills informally. Schools can create informal activities such as English Day, English Club, etc.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings from this study indicate a clear gap in the teachers' English language proficiency, particularly in speaking and explaining subject matter in English. The majority of teachers reported a lack of confidence in using English during lessons, which aligns with the findings of previous studies. Widayani et al., (2024) highlighted that teacher confidence in using English for instruction is critical for effective communication and teaching. The teachers' low confidence in speaking English may significantly hinder the potential for effective language use in the classroom, limiting their ability to engage students and provide instructions in English.

Additionally, the teachers' responses suggest that while some have the necessary reading and writing skills, speaking and listening remain challenging areas. This finding supports the idea put forward by Sakinah (2022), who emphasized the need for comprehensive English language training programs that target all aspects of language proficiency, particularly speaking and listening. The teachers' lack of confidence in responding to students' questions in English is indicative of a need for more targeted practice in real-life communication scenarios.

Interestingly, the majority of teachers expressed a strong desire for additional English language training. This indicates that teachers are aware of their limitations and are open to professional development opportunities. This finding is consistent with the research by Nur et



al., (2023), who found that teachers who actively seek professional development in English tend to perform better in classroom language use. The high level of interest in informal practice opportunities is also noteworthy, suggesting that teachers prefer a more interactive and relaxed learning environment where they can gain confidence in using English without the pressure of formal assessments.

The need for English language training was particularly pronounced for teachers involved in subjects where English may be used as the medium of instruction. As noted by Puspitasari & Ishak (2023), effective EMI requires not only language proficiency but also pedagogical skills that integrate language learning with subject content. The teachers' varying educational backgrounds and teaching experiences further contribute to the complexity of implementing English as the medium of instruction at MTS Istiqlal.

Given these results, it is clear that MTS Istiqlal could benefit from developing a more structured professional development program focused on improving teachers' English language skills, particularly in speaking and listening. Training programs should focus on practical, communicative language use, offering teachers opportunities to practice language skills in authentic teaching contexts (Rifiyanti & Dewi, 2023). Moreover, integrating peer mentoring or mentorship from more experienced English teachers could be an effective strategy to enhance teachers' confidence in using English. As suggested by Nur et al., (2023), mentorship provides teachers with the support and encouragement they need to overcome language barriers in teaching.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to assess the English language needs of teachers at MTS Istiqlal, with a focus on their proficiency in using English as a medium of instruction. The results of the survey and interviews indicate that while many teachers possess basic English language skills, there is a significant gap in their confidence and ability to use English effectively in the classroom. The main areas of concern include speaking, listening comprehension, and the ability to explain subject content in English. Furthermore, the teachers expressed a strong desire for professional development opportunities, particularly in areas that would improve their speaking and listening skills.

The findings suggest that MTS Istiqlal could greatly benefit from implementing a structured English language training program that focuses on practical and communicative

aspects of language use, particularly in teaching contexts. Such a program could help teachers gain the confidence needed to use English as the medium of instruction more effectively. Additionally, informal opportunities for practicing English, such as peer mentoring or group discussions, could offer teachers a supportive environment to enhance their language skills.

This study also highlights the importance of considering the diverse educational backgrounds and teaching experiences of the faculty when designing language training programs. Tailoring professional development opportunities to address these varying needs will likely be more effective in improving overall English language proficiency among the teachers.

Future research could further explore the impact of professional development programs on teachers' confidence and language proficiency, as well as investigate students' perceptions of English as the medium of instruction. By addressing these language needs, MTS Istiqlal can improve its ability to offer high-quality education in English, fostering a more effective teaching and learning environment for both teachers and students.

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