

PERCEIVED LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION: EVIDENCE FROM UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the language-related difficulties encountered by undergraduate students at a Vietnamese university studying in an English-medium instruction (EMI) environment. Drawing on data from 482 second-, third-, and fourth-year students across three faculties, the study employed multiple analytical methods to investigate the specific language challenges students experienced, the variations by gender, academic year, and discipline in these challenges, the interrelationships among different types of language difficulty, and the extent to which they predicted English proficiency test scores. The findings showed that students reported difficulties across all four language skills, with writing and speaking perceived as more challenging than listening and reading. The four perceived-ease dimensions were moderately to strongly intercorrelated. Of the four dimensions, only perceived ease in listening was significantly associated with the English proficiency score ($\beta = .228$, $p = .016$). These findings highlight the need for sustained language support from the first year and throughout students' subsequent EMI studies. Ongoing collaboration between language and content teachers is also essential to address students' linguistic needs more effectively in EMI contexts.

Keywords: *English-medium instruction (EMI); Higher education; Linguistic challenges; Undergraduate students; Vietnam.*