

Empowering Primary Madrasah Teachers through an EMI-Informed English Training Module: A Design-Based Qualitative Research in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Magelang Regency

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Abstract : The expansion of *English Medium Instruction* (EMI) is examined in higher education, while primary education, where language foundations develop, has received less attention. In Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), English is a local-content subject and often taught by non-specialist teachers. This study employed *Design-Based Research* (DBR) to develop an EMI-informed English training module for non-specialist MI teachers in Magelang Regency. The study followed seven iterative stages: needs analysis, design, prototyping, expert validation, limited trial, reflection and revision, and module finalisation. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, document analysis, teacher reflections, and expert validation, then analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Needs analysis generated four themes: limited classroom English, gaps in young learner pedagogy, limited media, and self-efficacy and professional identity. The module integrates EMI insights, professional development principles, sociocultural theory, and self-efficacy theory through gradual mastery, socially mediated collaboration, and planned translanguaging. The study provides a contextualised artefact while demonstrating that participatory design can function as professional development.

Keywords : English Medium Instruction; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Non-Specialist Teachers; Design-Based Research; Teacher Self-Efficacy

Abstrak : Perluasan *English Medium Instruction* (EMI) umumnya dikaji pada pendidikan tinggi, sementara jenjang dasar sebagai fondasi perkembangan bahasa masih kurang mendapat perhatian. Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), bahasa Inggris berstatus muatan lokal dan banyak diajarkan oleh guru non-spesialis. Penelitian ini menggunakan *Design-Based Research* (DBR) untuk merancang modul pelatihan bahasa Inggris berinformasi EMI bagi guru MI non-spesialis di Kabupaten Magelang. Penelitian dilaksanakan melalui tujuh tahap iteratif: analisis kebutuhan, desain, prototipe, validasi ahli, uji coba terbatas, refleksi dan revisi, serta finalisasi modul. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara, diskusi kelompok terarah, observasi, analisis dokumen, refleksi guru, dan validasi ahli, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik reflektif. Hasil analisis kebutuhan menghasilkan

empat tema utama: keterbatasan bahasa Inggris kelas, kesenjangan pedagogi pembelajar muda, keterbatasan media, serta efikasi diri dan identitas profesional. Modul mengintegrasikan wawasan EMI, prinsip pengembangan profesional, teori sosiokultural, dan teori efikasi diri melalui penguasaan bertahap, kolaborasi sosial, dan translanguaging terencana. Penelitian ini menghasilkan artefak kontekstual sekaligus menunjukkan bahwa perancangan partisipatif dapat berfungsi sebagai pengembangan profesional.

Kata Kunci : *English Medium Instruction; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Guru Non-Spesialis; Design-Based Research; Efikasi Diri Guru*

INTRODUCTION

English has long occupied the position of academic and professional lingua franca, and this reality is nowhere more visible than in the worldwide expansion of English Medium Instruction (EMI). This growth is not merely a change of instructional medium; it is a shift that redefines the teacher's role altogether: teachers are now expected to integrate language proficiency with content delivery, even though most were never prepared for this dual role (Galloway & Rose, 2021; Richards & Pun, 2023). A critical review of EMI developments over the past decade reveals a landscape that has grown increasingly sophisticated conceptually, yet also exposes a persistent bias research attention remains overwhelmingly concentrated at the higher-education level (Wang et al., 2025; Pun et al., 2024). Lecturers' experiences in EMI classrooms, their training needs, and the tensions between institutional demands and pedagogical readiness have been mapped in considerable detail within university contexts across Asia and Europe (Shao & Rose, 2022; Gronchi & Hopkyns, 2025; Deroey, 2023). By contrast, the primary level of education where language foundations are genuinely laid has rarely been examined through an EMI lens, even though it is precisely in this space that teacher-readiness issues surface in their rawest form.

In Indonesia, this tension takes on a distinctive character. Following the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum, English was removed from the list of compulsory primary-school subjects and relegated to local-content or extracurricular status, before its space was reopened under the Merdeka Curriculum (Widagsa et al., 2025). This policy oscillation left behind an unresolved structural legacy: a persistent shortage of primary-level teachers genuinely trained to teach English. To close that gap, the responsibility for teaching English is frequently handed to homeroom or generalist teachers educators prepared to teach a broad range of subjects but not specifically equipped with linguistic knowledge or foreign-language pedagogy (Widagsa et al., 2025; Munandar & Newton, 2021). This phenomenon, known in the literature as *out-of-field teaching*, produces teachers who work outside their area of expertise and, not infrequently, outside their professional comfort zone.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Indonesia's Islamic primary schools, offer a highly representative site through which to examine this problem. In Magelang Regency alone, hundreds of MI schools list English as local content, yet most of their teachers are graduates of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education (PGMI) or Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) programs with no background in English-language education. A similar pattern has been documented across national contexts: when non-specialist teachers are compelled to take on English instruction, what emerges is not merely a vocabulary deficit but a crisis of professional identity, a deficit in self-efficacy, and genuine confusion over what they are actually meant to teach (Manan & Hajar, 2024; Matsumura, 2022). Studies of non-specialist primary teachers show that their knowledge base is often inadequate for managing the complexity of language teaching, and that self-directed development efforts unstructured and unsupported by evidence prove insufficient to close the existing knowledge gap (Widagsa et al., 2025). On the affective side, weak command of "classroom English" bears directly on teachers' belief in their own capability, and that fragile self-belief in turn narrows the space for

pedagogical experimentation in the classroom (Matsumura, 2025; Song et al., 2025; Reynolds et al., 2021).

The madrasah context adds a layer of complexity that cannot be overlooked. MI schools are not simply primary schools with a religious label; they carry a mission of character and Islamic-values formation that demands the integration of academic content with value content, meaning that teacher development in this setting must also be attuned to a distinctive Islamic-education ecosystem (Memon et al., 2024). At the same time, many MI schools operate under considerable resource constraints, echoing the challenges faced by English teachers in rural schools across various countries, where limited materials and support demand even greater teacher engagement and creativity (Kong et al., 2022). Under such conditions, assigning English-teaching duties without adequate support risks placing teachers at a disadvantage. Experience from higher-education EMI programs offers a parallel lesson: content lecturers asked to teach in English report specific support needs ranging from language reinforcement to classroom strategies and that support proves most effective when tailored to their actual needs rather than delivered as generic training (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022). Even the debate over whether classrooms should be conducted entirely in English shows that "English-only" policies frequently clash with the multilingual realities of the classroom, calling for a more flexible stance (Sahan et al., 2022). These lessons, though born in the lecture hall, resonate strongly within the MI classroom.

Interestingly, a number of insights developed within higher-education EMI research turn out to be relevant indeed, urgently needed when brought down to the primary level. Experience from EMI training programs confirms that the competence teachers require extends far beyond language fluency; it encompasses language awareness, classroom communication strategies, language-content integration, and a mindset shift from merely "teaching in English" to "teaching English meaningfully" (Deroey, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). One of the most actionable findings is the recognition that using learners' first language is not a failure but a resource. The *translanguaging* perspective views learners' multilingual repertoire as capital that can be deliberately activated to deepen understanding, rather than suppressed in the name of target-language purity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Wei, 2024). Within EMI and CLIL classrooms, *translanguaging* practices have been shown to facilitate meaning-making and reduce language anxiety (Gu et al., 2022; Tai & Wei, 2023; Lu et al., 2023). For Indonesian classrooms, which are inherently multilingual blending English, Indonesian, and local languages this approach feels not only legitimate but natural and contextually apt (Liando et al., 2023; Rajendram, 2023).

The question then shifts: how can non-specialist MI teachers be effectively equipped with these competencies? The teacher professional-development literature offers a fairly clear direction. Impactful professional development is not a single information-dense workshop but an intervention that deliberately links new understanding, motivation to change, mastery of concrete techniques, and the embedding of practice into everyday teaching routines (Sims et al., 2023; Sancar et al., 2021). Meta-analyses show that well-designed training can substantially raise teacher self-efficacy, although this effect tends to decay without ongoing mentoring and reinforcement (Zhou et al., 2023; Gümüş & Bellibaş, 2023). The collaborative dimension also matters: teacher learning flourishes within communities of practice, peer dialogue, and a supportive school culture (Geletu & Mihiretie, 2023; De Jong et al., 2022; Hudson, 2024; Liu et al., 2021). Within Indonesia's madrasah sector, inter-teacher collaboration has even been recognized as a pillar supporting instructional innovation and curriculum alignment (Budirahayu & Saud, 2023; Memon et al., 2024).

Yet knowing the principles of effective training does not, by itself, produce a tool that fits the context. This is where Design-Based Research (DBR) offers an appropriate path forward. DBR is a methodology that iteratively designs, tests, and refines educational interventions within real settings while simultaneously generating theoretical knowledge that can be generalized beyond the context in which it was developed (McKenney & Reeves, 2019; Hoadley & Campos, 2022). Its cyclical nature allows a product in this case, a training module to be shaped through needs analysis, prototype development, expert validation, limited trialing, and repeated reflection and revision (Tinoca et al., 2022; Chiu et al., 2021). Equally important, teachers' participation in the design

process itself functions as a form of professional development: teachers are not objects of training but co-designers whose knowledge is sharpened through involvement (Peters-Burton et al., 2024). Theoretically, a design of this kind rests on sociocultural theory, which frames learning as a socially mediated process occurring within the zone of proximal development, and on self-efficacy theory, which holds that teachers' beliefs are shaped through mastery experiences, modeling, and affective support (Vygotsky, 1978; Poehner & Lantolf, 2024; Bandura, 1997).

Although these elements exist separately in the literature, no effort has yet combined them into a single, integrated tool specifically targeting non-English-major MI teachers through DBR within the Indonesian context. EMI research stops at higher education; research on language-teacher self-efficacy is more often survey-based and situated in general schools (Wang et al., 2024; Xu, 2025); while studies of teaching English to young learners rarely connect themselves to either the EMI framework or the Islamic-education context of madrasah. It is this gap that the present study seeks to bridge. Its novelty lies in developing an *EMI-informed* English training module designed specifically for non-specialist MI teachers through a DBR approach, with Magelang Regency as the empirical context and the nuances of Islamic education as its accompanying frame.

Building on this background, the present study pursues several interrelated objectives. First, to identify MI teachers' needs in teaching English. Second, to map the challenges faced by non-English-major MI teachers in their teaching practice. Third, to design an EMI-informed English training module responsive to these needs and challenges. Fourth, to describe the DBR process guiding the module's development, from needs analysis through final revision. Fifth, to examine the framework for teachers' perceived usefulness of the module as projected through expert validation and limited trialing. In doing so, this article offers not only a training artefact but also a methodological argument about how contextual teacher-development tools ought to be built.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach within a *Design-Based Research* (DBR) framework to develop an EMI-informed English training module for non-specialist Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers. DBR was selected because it enables the simultaneous development of practical educational solutions and theoretical understanding through iterative cycles in authentic contexts (McKenney & Reeves, 2019; Hoadley & Campos, 2022; Tinoca et al., 2022). The research followed seven interconnected stages: (1) needs analysis, (2) initial design, (3) prototype development, (4) expert validation, (5) limited trial, (6) reflection and revision, and (7) final module compilation. These stages operated iteratively rather than linearly, allowing findings from validation and trial phases to inform subsequent revisions (Chiu et al., 2021).

The study was conducted in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah schools in Magelang Regency, Central Java. Participants were selected through *purposive sampling* based on their relevance to the research objectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The core participants comprised 15–25 MI teachers who taught English despite having non-English education backgrounds, particularly PGMI or PGSD. To strengthen perspective triangulation, the study also involved three madrasah principals, two supervisors, and three expert validators representing English-language teaching, curriculum development, and madrasah education. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, *focus group discussions*, classroom observations, document analysis, written teacher reflections, and expert-validation sheets. The combination of multiple sources and techniques was used to enhance the credibility and contextual depth of the findings through methodological triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Naeem et al., 2023).

Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis through the stages of data familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and final reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis also incorporated the six-step procedure proposed by Naeem et al. (2023) to connect emerging themes with the conceptual framework guiding module development. Data adequacy was determined by the richness, relevance, and explanatory depth of the information rather than by a fixed participant number (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Research trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability using source and method triangulation, member checking, thick contextual

description, audit trails, and traceable evidence throughout the DBR process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's outcomes across four mutually reinforcing layers: the framework of teacher needs and challenges generated through analysis; the conceptual framework guiding the design; the module's architecture together with the DBR process that shaped it; and a theoretical discussion of the mechanisms explaining why a module of this kind is projected to work. In keeping with the nature of DBR, findings and discussion are woven together, since every design decision is, in effect, a theoretical claim being tested (McKenney & Reeves, 2019; Hoadley & Campos, 2022).

Needs and Challenges of Non-Specialist MI Teachers

Thematic analysis of teacher needs converges on four interrelated themes. The first theme is limited classroom English. Non-specialist MI teachers are generally able to understand the material but falter when it comes to managing the classroom, giving instructions, providing feedback, and sustaining interaction naturally in English. This limitation is not merely a matter of vocabulary but concerns the most operational functions of language in teaching, and it is precisely at this point that teachers' self-confidence is most vulnerable to erosion (Matsumura, 2022; Matsumura, 2025). The second theme is a gap in strategies for teaching English to young learners. Teachers trained as generalists often lack a repertoire of child-appropriate strategies games, songs, stories, and communicative activities and tend instead to fall back on writing-centered, rote-oriented instruction (Reynolds et al., 2021; Widagsa et al., 2025). The third theme concerns media and learning resources: the scarcity of contextually appropriate teaching materials forces teachers to improvise without adequate guidance. The fourth theme, which cuts across and absorbs the other three, is self-efficacy and professional identity. When a teacher feels like "not a real English teacher," that fragile self-belief narrows their willingness to experiment and triggers an identity tension similar to that experienced by non-specialist content teachers in other EMI contexts (Manan & Hajar, 2024; Song et al., 2025).

These four themes show that the problem facing MI teachers cannot be reduced to "insufficient English proficiency." The problem is layered linguistic, pedagogical, material, and affective and the proposed solution must therefore be layered as well. A systematic mapping between each challenge and the module component that addresses it is presented in Table 1. This mapping serves as a bridge between the analysis and design phases: it ensures that every module component is born from an identified need rather than from the designer's assumptions.

Table 1. Synthesis of non-specialist MI teachers' challenges and the EMI-informed module components addressing them

Challenge dimension	Concrete manifestation in the MI classroom	Module component addressing it	Conceptual grounding
Linguistic	Struggles to give instructions, feedback, and manage interaction in English	Functional classroom-English unit and a graded bank of classroom expressions	Matsumura (2022, 2025); Deroey (2023)
Pedagogical	Limited strategies for young learners; dominated by written, rote-based patterns	TEYL strategy unit: games, songs, stories, communicative activities	Reynolds et al. (2021); Widagsa et al. (2025)
Linguistic–pedagogical	Hesitant to use Indonesian and local languages in class	Planned translanguaging guide for meaning bridging	Cenoz & Gorter (2022); Liando et al. (2023); Rajendram (2023)
Material	Limited contextual teaching materials; unguided improvisation	Templates, simple media examples, and adaptation rubrics	Chiu et al. (2021); Gu et al. (2022)

Affective-identity	Low confidence; feeling “not a real English teacher”	Graduated mastery activities, reflection, and peer support	Bandura (1997); Matsumura (2025); Liu et al. (2021)
Institutional	Unstructured support and collaboration	Community-of-practice scheme and post-training mentoring	Geletu & Mihiretie (2023); De Jong et al. (2022); Budirahayu & Saud (2023)

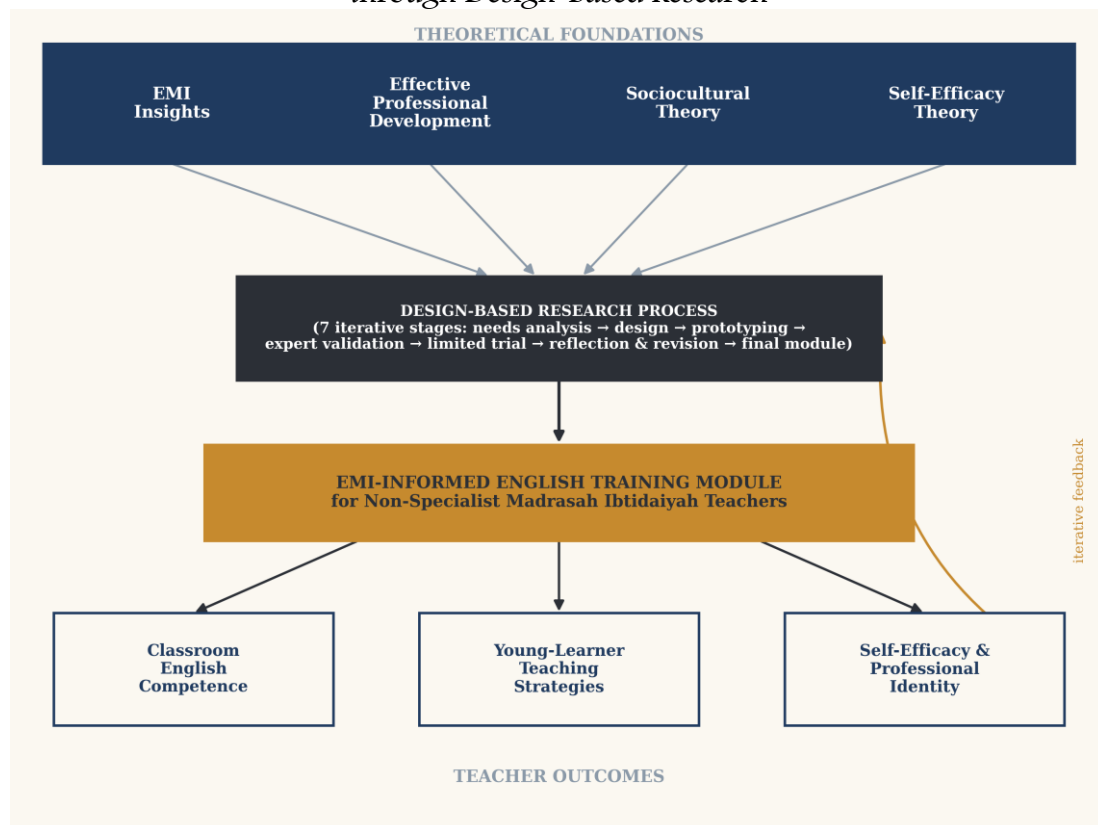
Source: Researcher's analysis (2026)

This finding reaffirms the relevance of EMI insights to the primary level. Just as higher-education EMI training programs conclude that teacher competence must encompass language awareness, classroom strategies, and language-content integration (Deroey, 2023; Wang et al., 2025), MI teachers likewise need more than a mere language course. They need a tool that addresses all four layers of challenge in an integrated manner.

Conceptual Framework of the EMI-Informed Module

Building on the identified needs, this study constructs a conceptual framework that links four theoretical sources into a single design logic, as visualized in Figure 1. EMI insights contribute an orientation toward language-content integration and the acceptance of the first language's role (Richards & Pun, 2023; Gu et al., 2022). Principles of effective professional development contribute the intervention's architecture linking understanding, motivation, technique, and the embedding of practice (Sims et al., 2023; Sancar et al., 2021). Sociocultural theory contributes the premise that teacher learning is socially mediated and unfolds within the zone of proximal development through scaffolding and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978; Poehner & Lantolf, 2024). Self-efficacy theory, meanwhile, contributes attention to the sources of teacher belief, particularly mastery experiences and affective support (Bandura, 1997).

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for developing an EMI-informed English training module through Design-Based Research



Source: Researcher's construction (2026)

These four sources do not stand in isolation; rather, they are converged through the DBR process into a module that, in turn, targets three mutually reinforcing teacher outcomes: improved classroom English competence, mastery of teaching strategies suited to young learners, and strengthened self-efficacy and professional identity. It is this logic that makes the module not merely a collection of materials but a theoretically grounded intervention.

Module Architecture and the DBR Process

The designed module comprises several units that mirror the mapping in Table 1: a functional classroom-English unit, a TEYL strategies unit, a planned-translanguaging guide, a template for materials and media, and a reflection and community-of-practice scheme. Each unit follows the principle of needs analysis as the basis for design, so that the module's content is anchored in real problems rather than an abstract syllabus (Chiu et al., 2021). The translanguaging guide receives particular attention because it addresses a doubt common among teachers: whether using Indonesian and local languages in the English classroom constitutes a failure. The module asserts the opposite that deliberately activating learners' multilingual repertoire is a legitimate and productive strategy, consistent with practices already documented in Indonesian classrooms and the broader EMI/CLIL context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Liando et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2023; Tai & Wei, 2023).

At a more granular level, the classroom-English unit is not designed as a list of vocabulary to be memorized but as a bank of functional expressions organized by classroom situation opening a lesson, giving instructions, offering praise, managing turn-taking, and closing a lesson graded in difficulty so that teachers can begin with what is most essential. This approach rests on the recognition that, for non-specialist teachers, language mastery that can be used immediately in class is far more empowering than mastery of abstract linguistic theory (Matsumura, 2025; Deroey, 2023). The TEYL strategies unit, meanwhile, translates the characteristics of young learners short attention spans, the need for movement and play, and affective sensitivity into a repertoire of concrete, easily replicable activities, so that teachers no longer default to text-centered, rote-based teaching patterns (Reynolds et al., 2021). The media and materials component, for its part, is designed to be adaptable to the resources available within each madrasah, acknowledging that many MI schools operate under constraints yet still demand quality. These three units do not stand alone but are stitched together into a single coherent learning experience, in which language mastery, pedagogical strategy, and media use reinforce one another. In this way, the module seeks to address not a single symptom but the entire system of problems that has long entangled non-specialist MI teachers.

The module was not produced in a single pass but shaped through the DBR cycle. In the initial-design and prototype-development stages, the conceptual framework was translated into concrete materials. The prototype then underwent expert validation, where validators assessed content feasibility, pedagogical soundness, and contextual fit. Following this, the module was tested in a limited trial to examine its usability under real conditions, accompanied by the collection of teacher reflections. Findings from both stages fed the process back into a space for revision before the final module was compiled. This cyclical flow is the core of DBR: the relevance and consistency of the design are tested progressively, and knowledge of "what works and why" grows with each iteration (Tinoca et al., 2022; McKenney & Reeves, 2019). Notably, teachers' involvement as co-designers throughout this cycle simultaneously functions as professional development the design process itself sharpens teachers' knowledge of, and sense of ownership over, the module (Peters-Burton et al., 2024).

Self-Efficacy, Sociocultural Mediation, and Translanguaging as Mechanisms

Why is a module of this kind projected to have an impact? The answer lies in the mechanisms that link design to theory. From a self-efficacy standpoint, the module is designed to provide graduated mastery experiences: teachers practice classroom expressions they can use immediately, accumulate small successes, and build belief from there (Bandura, 1997). Evidence from similar interventions supports this logic training targeting classroom English has been shown to rapidly raise the self-efficacy of non-specialist teachers (Matsumura, 2025), and meta-analyses demonstrate the positive effect of professional development on teacher self-efficacy more broadly

(Zhou et al., 2023). The same literature, however, offers an important caution: such effects tend to decay without ongoing reinforcement (Matsumura, 2025; Zhou et al., 2023). It is precisely for this reason that the module incorporates a community-of-practice scheme and post-training mentoring, so that newly built confidence does not evaporate once the workshop ends.

From a sociocultural standpoint, this reinforcement finds its explanation. Teacher learning is not an individual event but a socially mediated process; what a teacher cannot yet accomplish alone can be achieved through peer and mentor scaffolding within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Poehner & Lantolf, 2024). Collegial support and a supportive school culture have been shown to relate to teacher self-efficacy and satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021), while dialogue and collaboration among teachers constitute a fertile vehicle for learning (De Jong et al., 2022; Geletu & Mihiretie, 2023; Hudson, 2024). Within the madrasah context, such collaboration has even been recognized as a pillar supporting innovation (Budirahayu & Saud, 2023). By embedding a collaborative dimension, the module treats the teacher community as learning infrastructure rather than an afterthought.

This sociocultural dimension also reveals the importance of teacher agency. Implementing English instruction is not a mechanical process of applying top-down policy but a negotiation teachers undertake with their own history, resources, and contextual constraints; from a cultural-historical perspective, teachers are agents who actively interpret and reshape the demands placed upon them (Dang et al., 2024). The designed module honors this agency by not treating teachers as passive recipients but by inviting them to adapt strategies to their own classroom conditions. A similar logic applies to building self-efficacy from an early stage: interventions that link the use of English as a lingua franca with reflective experience have been shown to nurture pre-service teachers' confidence in multilingual contexts (Matsumura & Tatsuyama, 2024). This finding reinforces the module's rationale: that confidence is not born from lectures about language but from opportunities to use it meaningfully and to experience tangible success. Self-efficacy building, respect for agency, and social mediation thus operate not as three separate pathways but as a single, interwoven thread sustaining teachers' transformation as a whole.

Translanguaging, meanwhile, functions as a bridge linking linguistic, pedagogical, and affective dimensions all at once. By legitimizing the deliberate use of the first language, the module lowers cognitive load and language anxiety, opens space for participation, and eases the pressure on teachers who feel their English proficiency is imperfect (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Wei, 2024; Rajendram, 2023). For the multilingual MI classroom, this approach transforms what was once perceived as a weakness language mixing into a powerful pedagogical strategy (Liando et al., 2023; Gu et al., 2022). It is here that EMI insight, born in higher education, finds a new, contextually grounded form at the primary level.

Perceived Usefulness and Implications

The module's evaluation framework in this study rests on two sources: expert validators' assessments and teachers' perceptions during the limited trial. Expert validation provides a systematic assessment of feasibility, while teacher reflections capture usefulness as felt in practice. Theoretically, a module rooted in real needs and incorporating mastery experiences and peer support is projected to be perceived as useful by teachers, mirroring patterns documented in other EMI training and professional-development interventions, where training is experienced by teachers as both a challenge and a growth opportunity (Wang et al., 2025; Deroey, 2023; Xu, 2025). It should be emphasized that this article presents the module's design together with its evaluation framework; the full collection of trial and validation data forms part of the DBR cycle reported here as process, and the interpretation of usefulness is framed as a theoretically projected mechanism rather than a standalone empirical claim.

Expert validation within this framework assesses the module across several complementary dimensions: the accuracy of its content relative to identified needs, the pedagogical soundness of the strategies offered, its readability and ease of use for non-specialist teachers, and its fit with the madrasah context and the characteristics of young learners. These dimensions are not merely an administrative checklist but a mirror of the theoretical claim the module carries that a good tool must be simultaneously accurate, applicable, and contextual. Validator feedback is then treated not

as a final verdict but as input that turns the design wheel back toward refinement, in keeping with the spirit of DBR, which treats critique as fuel for iteration (McKenney & Reeves, 2019; Chiu et al., 2021). By linking expert assessment with teacher reflection, this evaluation framework seeks to keep the module standing on two feet at once: academic rigor and practical wisdom.

The implications of this study move in three directions. Practically, the module offers a concrete tool for improving the quality of English teaching in MI schools, particularly for non-specialist teachers who have long worked without adequate guidance. In terms of policy, the findings highlight the need for structured institutional support not mere assignment, but ongoing training and space for collaboration echoing calls for language policy to attend to the readiness of those who implement it (Manan & Hajar, 2024; Memon et al., 2024). Methodologically, this study demonstrates how DBR can be used to build contextual teacher-development tools, while affirming that a participatory design process is itself a form of professional development (Peters-Burton et al., 2024; Tinoca et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study set out from a problem that has long escaped the attention of EMI research: the plight of non-specialist teachers assigned to teach English at the primary level, particularly within Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Through a Design-Based Research approach, the study identified that MI teachers' needs and challenges are layered spanning limited classroom English, gaps in strategies for teaching young learners, material constraints, and issues of self-efficacy and professional identity. Building on this mapping, the study designed an EMI-informed English training module that converges EMI insights, principles of effective professional development, sociocultural theory, and self-efficacy theory into a single design logic. The iterative DBR process from needs analysis, design, and prototyping through expert validation, limited trial, and reflection and revision positions teachers not as objects of training but as co-designers whose knowledge is sharpened through involvement. Theoretically, the module is projected to work through three mutually reinforcing mechanisms: the provision of graduated mastery experiences that build confidence, social mediation through a community of practice that resists the decay of training effects, and the legitimization of translanguaging, which turns language mixing from a weakness into a strategy.

This study's principal contribution is twofold. It offers an artefact a module ready to be refined and implemented and, at the same time, a methodological argument for how contextual teacher-development tools ought to be built. By bringing the EMI lens down to the primary level and situating it within the frame of madrasah education, this study fills a gap that has long gone unaddressed. Beyond that, it offers a way of seeing non-specialist teachers not as a problem to be fixed but as partners whose capacity can be grown through appropriate design. This shift in perspective is perhaps the study's most valuable contribution: from blaming teachers' limitations to designing support that honors their potential.

Several recommendations follow. For policymakers within the madrasah sector, assigning English-teaching duties to non-specialist teachers must be accompanied by structured support ongoing training and space for collaboration rather than a mere transfer of responsibility. For professional-development providers, training design should include post-activity mentoring so that newly built confidence does not evaporate once the workshop ends. For future researchers, applying the module at a wider scale and over a longer time span is needed to test the durability of its impact, including the possibility of adapting the module for madrasah and primary-school contexts in other regions. This study's limitations its focus on a single regency and its emphasis on the design stage simultaneously open the door for more extensive empirical testing in future research.

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