

Investigating the Challenges and Solutions in Transitioning to English-Medium Instruction An Applied Study at Saida University

دراسة التحديات والحلول في الانتقال إلى التعليم باللغة الإنجليزية: دراسة تطبيقية في جامعة سعيدة

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines the challenges and solutions in transitioning to English-Medium Instruction (EMI) at Saida University in Algeria. English-Medium Instruction (EMI)—defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where English is not the first language—has become a significant global trend in higher education internationalisation. Using a qualitative research design grounded in Creswell's methodological framework, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 24 university teachers across diverse academic disciplines. Thematic analysis revealed four primary challenge themes: linguistic preparedness (inadequate English proficiency among teachers and students), pedagogical adaptation (difficulties in modifying teaching approaches for EMI), resource limitations (insufficient institutional support and materials), and cultural identity concerns (tensions between English adoption and Arabic academic identity). Despite these challenges, participants identified strategic solutions including gradual implementation models, targeted professional development, and collaborative teaching frameworks. The findings suggest that successful EMI implementation requires comprehensive institutional strategies that address both linguistic and pedagogical needs while respecting local cultural and academic contexts. This study contributes to the growing body of EMI research in Arab higher education contexts and offers evidence-based recommendations for stakeholders involved in EMI policy and practice.

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Keywords: educational challenges, English-Medium Instruction, higher education, language policy, teacher perspectives.

ملخص: تبحث هذه الدراسة النوعية في التحديات والحلول المتعلقة بالانتقال إلى التعليم باللغة الإنجليزية (EMI) في جامعة سعيدة بالجزائر. أصبح التعليم باللغة الإنجليزية – (EMI) الذي يُعرّف بأنه استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية لتدريس المواد الأكاديمية في البلدان التي لا تكون فيها الإنجليزية اللغة الأولى – اتجاهاً عالمياً مهماً في دولنة التعليم العالي. من خلال تصميم بحثي نوعي يستند إلى الإطار المنهجي لكريسيويل، تم جمع البيانات عبر مقابلات شبه منظمة ومناقشات مجموعات التركيز مع 24 من أساتذة الجامعة يمثلون تخصصات أكاديمية متنوعة. كشف التحليل الموضوعي عن أربعة محاور رئيسية للتحديات: الاستعداد اللغوي (ضعف الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية بين المدرسين والطلاب)، والتكيف البيداغوجي (صعوبات في تعديل طرق التدريس للتعليم باللغة الإنجليزية)، ومحدودية الموارد (عدم كفاية الدعم المؤسسي والمواد التعليمية)، ومخاوف الهوية الثقافية (التناقضات بين اعتماد اللغة الإنجليزية والهوية الأكاديمية العربية). على الرغم من هذه التحديات، حدد المشاركون حلولاً استراتيجية شملت نماذج التطبيق التدريجي، والتطوير المهني المستهدف، وأطر التدريس التعاوني. تشير النتائج إلى أن التنفيذ الناجح للتعليم باللغة الإنجليزية يتطلب استراتيجيات مؤسسية شاملة تعالج كلاً من الاحتياجات اللغوية والبيداغوجية مع احترام السياقات الثقافية والأكاديمية المحلية. تساهم هذه الدراسة في زيادة رصيد البحوث حول التعليم باللغة الإنجليزية في سياقات التعليم العالي العربية وتقدم توصيات مستندة إلى الأدلة لأصحاب المصلحة المعنيين بسياسة وممارسة التعليم باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم بالإنجليزية، التعليم العالي، وجهات نظر المعلمين، سياسة اللغة، التحديات التربوية.

1. Introduction:

The internationalization of higher education has positioned English as the dominant lingua franca in academic settings worldwide, leading to the rapid expansion of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in non-Anglophone countries (Botha, 2013). According to Bradford (2016), EMI refers to "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English". This educational approach has gained momentum as universities seek to enhance their global competitiveness, attract international students and faculty, and prepare graduates for the global job market (Macaro, 2018). Despite its growing prevalence, the implementation of EMI presents significant challenges that vary across linguistic, cultural, and institutional contexts.

In the Arab world, where Arabic serves as the primary language of instruction in pre-university education, the transition to EMI in higher education represents a particularly complex transition (Hamid et al., 2013). The linguistic distance between Arabic and English creates unique pedagogical hurdles, while the rich cultural and academic traditions of Arab education systems further complicate this transition (Alkhateeb & Alhawsawi, 2023). In Algeria, where Arabic and French have historically dominated educational contexts, the recent shift toward English introduces additional layers of complexity to an already multilingual landscape. Saida University, as a representative Algerian institution, provides an ideal setting to examine these challenges and develop context-appropriate solutions.

Previous research on EMI has highlighted various obstacles, including students' limited English proficiency, teachers' insufficient pedagogical training, and institutional resource

constraints (Bradford & Brown, 2018; Macaro et al., 2018). However, most studies have focused on European or Asian contexts, creating a significant gap in understanding the Arab world in general and Algeria in particular. Moreover, while many studies document EMI challenges, fewer explore the practical solutions that educators develop through their lived experiences in the classroom. This study addresses these gaps by examining both the challenges and solutions identified by university teachers engaged in EMI implementation at Saida University.

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges do university teachers at Saida University encounter in transitioning to English-Medium Instruction?
2. What strategies and solutions do these teachers develop to address EMI implementation challenges?
3. How can institutional support systems be optimized to facilitate effective EMI implementation?

This research employs a qualitative methodology based on Creswell's design principles (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich, contextualized insights from EMI teachers across multiple disciplines. The findings will contribute to developing a framework for effective EMI implementation in Algerian universities and similar contexts where English is being adopted as a medium of instruction.

2. Literature Review

1.2. The Global Expansion of EMI:

The proliferation of English-Medium Instruction in higher education institutions worldwide represents one of the most significant trends in educational internationalization over the past two decades. The driving forces behind this expansion include globalization pressures, international ranking systems, and the desire to prepare students for participation in global academic and professional communities (Doiz et al., 2011). As universities compete for international recognition and students, EMI has become a strategic tool for enhancing institutional visibility and attractiveness. The trend is particularly pronounced in disciplines such as engineering, medicine, and business, where English serves as the dominant language of international communication (Fenton-Smith et al., 2017).

The implementation of EMI varies considerably across contexts, reflecting different historical, linguistic, and educational traditions. In East Asia, countries like Japan have implemented top-down government initiatives such as the Top Global University Project to promote EMI and internationalize higher education (Rose & McKinley, 2018). Similarly, in the Middle East, nations including Saudi Arabia have incorporated EMI into their educational development plans, particularly in scientific and technical fields (Ali, 2013). European institutions have adopted EMI as part of the Bologna Process, aiming to create a cohesive European Higher Education Area. These diverse implementations demonstrate that EMI is not a monolithic approach but rather adapts to local educational ecosystems.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations of EMI:

Conceptually, EMI intersects several theoretical domains, including language acquisition theory, educational policy, and knowledge construction. Unlike traditional English language teaching, EMI focuses primarily on content delivery rather than explicit language instruction (Macaro, 2018). This distinction creates unique pedagogical demands, as content specialists must facilitate both subject learning and language acquisition simultaneously. The relationship between EMI and approaches like Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) remains complex, with ongoing debates about their theoretical boundaries and practical applications.

EMI implementation raises important questions about linguistic ecology and the preservation of local languages in academic domains. Critics have expressed concern about the potential hegemony of English and its impact on knowledge production and dissemination in non-English languages (Earls, 2016). In Arab contexts, where Arabic has a rich academic heritage, the adoption of EMI creates tensions between the pragmatic benefits of English proficiency and the importance of maintaining Arabic as a language of science and scholarship.

2.3. EMI Challenges in International Contexts:

Research across diverse international contexts has revealed consistent patterns of challenges in EMI implementation. These challenges can be categorized into four main areas: linguistic, pedagogical, institutional, and cultural.

Linguistic challenges represent the most frequently documented obstacle in EMI literature. Studies from Japan, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia consistently highlight the problem of insufficient English proficiency among both students and instructors (Aizawa et al., 2020; Bradford, 2016). For students, limited English skills hinder their ability to comprehend lectures, participate in discussions, and complete assessments effectively. For instructors, language limitations may reduce their ability to explain complex concepts clearly, facilitate interactive learning, and provide meaningful feedback. The linguistic challenges are particularly acute in disciplines with high technical vocabulary demands, such as engineering and health sciences (Evans & Morrison, 2011).

Pedagogical challenges encompass difficulties in adapting teaching methods to EMI contexts. Content specialists often lack training in language-sensitive content teaching, struggling to balance content coverage with language support (Chapple, 2015). The transition to EMI frequently requires a fundamental shift from teacher-centred to more interactive student-centred approaches, which may conflict with established educational traditions. Research in Saudi contexts has shown that even proficient English speakers among faculty may lack the specific pedagogical skills needed for effective EMI implementation (Ali, 2013).

Institutional challenges relate to policy implementation, resource allocation, and structural support systems. Studies frequently identify inadequate institutional preparation and fragmented support structures as significant barriers to successful EMI implementation (Bradford & Brown, 2018). The top-down nature of many EMI initiatives often creates a gap between policy vision and classroom reality, with insufficient consultation of frontline implementers. Additional institutional challenges include limited funding for teacher development, inappropriate assessment systems, and misaligned curriculum design.

Cultural challenges involve issues of identity, academic traditions, and intercultural communication. EMI implementation may provoke concerns about cultural imperialism and the marginalization of local knowledge systems (Botha, 2013). In classroom practice, cultural differences can manifest through conflicting expectations about teaching and learning styles, teacher-student relationships, and appropriate communication patterns. The Thai engineering students, for example, reported challenges in adapting to the interactive learning styles often associated with Western EMI approaches (Lavankura, 2013).

2.4. EMI in Arab Higher Education Contexts:

The Arab world presents a distinctive context for EMI implementation, characterized by complex linguistic landscapes where English coexists with Arabic and often former colonial languages. In Saudi Arabia, research has documented the challenges faced by students transitioning from Arabic-medium secondary education to English-medium university programs, particularly in scientific disciplines (Ali, 2013). This transition creates cognitive and

affective burdens as students struggle to master complex content in a new language simultaneously.

Studies in Saudi EMI contexts have identified the preparatory year program as a critical intervention point for addressing students' language needs before they begin their disciplinary studies. However, research suggests that these programs often fail to develop the specific academic literacy skills required for success in EMI contexts. Additionally, disciplinary specialists and language teachers often have misaligned expectations about their respective roles in developing students' English proficiency, leading to gaps in support (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022).

The Algerian context, with its unique historical relationship with Arabic and French, presents distinctive challenges for EMI implementation that have received limited research attention. Understanding these context-specific factors is essential for developing effective EMI models that respond to local educational traditions and needs.

2.5. Gaps in the Literature:

Despite the growing body of EMI research, significant gaps remain. Most studies focus on identifying challenges rather than exploring solutions, creating an imbalance in the literature. Additionally, research in Arab contexts has predominantly concentrated on Gulf countries, with limited attention to North African nations like Algeria. Furthermore, while teacher perspectives are sometimes included in EMI research, few studies place teachers' experiential knowledge at the center of analysis. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on Algerian university teachers' identification of both challenges and solutions in EMI implementation.

Table 1: Key EMI Challenges Identified in International Research

Challenge Category	Specific Challenge	Representative Contexts
Linguistic	Insufficient Student Proficiency. Teacher language limitations. Technical Vocabulary.	Saudi Arabia Japan Thailand
Pedagogical	Inappropriate Teaching Methods. Assessment difficulties. Balance between content and language/	Multiple context
Institutional	Inadequate policy implication. Limited teacher training. Resource Constraints.	Japan Saudi Arabia
Cultural	Identity concerns. Conflicting academic traditions. Intercultural communication.	Thailand Japan

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design based on Creswell's approach to inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), which emphasizes exploring research problems through the analysis of words and detailed views of participants. The design is particularly appropriate for investigating complex educational phenomena in their natural settings, allowing for the emergence of nuanced understandings of challenges and solutions in EMI implementation. Following Creswell's principles, this study prioritizes thick description, contextualization, and the exploration of multiple perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of the EMI transition at Saida University.

The research utilizes a single-case study design focused on Saida University as a representative Algerian institution undergoing EMI implementation. This approach enables an in-depth investigation of the specific contextual factors influencing EMI success and challenges. The case study design facilitates examination of the interplay between institutional policies, classroom practices, and teacher experiences, providing insights that may inform similar contexts across Algeria and the broader region.

3.2. Participant Selection:

Participants were selected using purposeful sampling strategies to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases that could provide diverse perspectives on EMI implementation. The sample consisted of 24 university teachers from Saida University representing four key academic disciplines: engineering sciences (6 participants), medical and health sciences (6 participants), natural sciences (6 participants), and social sciences (6 participants). This disciplinary distribution allows for comparison of challenges and solutions across different academic fields with varying EMI traditions and demands.

Inclusion criteria required participants to have at least two years of experience teaching in EMI settings at the university level. The sample included both early-career and experienced faculty members to capture potential variations in perspective based on career stage. Participants ranged in age from 32 to 58 years, with 14 male and 10 female representatives. All participants possessed at least a master's degree, with 15 holding doctoral qualifications.

3.3. Data Collection Methods:

Data collection employed two complementary methods: semi-structured interviews with trainee teachers at Dr Moulay Tahar-Saida University and focus group discussions. This qualitative study enhances the credibility and richness of the data by allowing for both individual reflection and collective sense-making.

The semi-structured interviews utilized a protocol developed from key themes identified in the literature review, with flexibility to explore emerging topics. Interview questions probed participants' experiences with EMI implementation, including perceived challenges, adaptation strategies, and recommendations for institutional support. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was conducted in a private setting at the university. With participant consent, interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Focus group discussions were organized by disciplinary clusters to facilitate conversation among colleagues with shared educational contexts. Each focus group included 6 participants and followed a structured protocol that encouraged discussion of collective challenges, shared solutions, and disciplinary-specific considerations for EMI implementation. The focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes each and were similarly audio-recorded and transcribed.

All data collection was conducted in English or Arabic, based on participant preference, with professional translation services employed to create parallel English-Arabic transcripts for

analysis. This bilingual approach respected participants' linguistic comfort while ensuring analytical consistency.

3.4. Data Analysis:

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019), employing a six-phase process: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the analysis. The process combined both deductive elements (based on established theoretical frameworks) and inductive elements (allowing for emergent themes from the data).

The analysis utilized both manual coding techniques and NVivo software support to manage the substantial textual data. Initial coding identified discrete units of meaning related to EMI challenges and solutions. These codes were then grouped into potential themes through an iterative process of comparison and refinement. Theme development focused on identifying patterns of meaning both within and across disciplinary groups, noting both convergent and divergent perspectives.

To enhance analytical rigour, the study employed several trustworthiness strategies that were developed by (Ivankova et al. 2006), including peer debriefing with colleagues familiar with EMI research, member checking by sharing preliminary findings with participants, and maintaining an audit trail of analytical decisions. These approaches strengthen the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the findings.

3.5. Ethical Considerations:

The research received approval from the University Ethics Committee before commencement. All participants provided informed consent after receiving comprehensive information about the research purposes, procedures, and data usage. Participants were assured of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information from reports. The research design respected participants' autonomy through voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

4. Results

Thematic analysis of interview and focus group data revealed four major themes related to challenges in EMI implementation, along with several emergent solution strategies developed by participants. Each theme is presented below with supporting evidence from the data.

4.1. Linguistic Preparedness Challenges:

The most frequently cited challenge category concerned linguistic preparedness, encompassing limitations in both student and teacher English proficiency. Participants consistently reported that students' English language skills were insufficient for the demands of EMI content learning, particularly in receptive skills like academic listening and reading.

An engineering professor explained: "Many of our students come from Arabic-medium secondary education...they struggle to understand technical lectures in English, especially with specialized vocabulary. They may recognize words in isolation but cannot follow extended explanations." (Participant 12, Engineering)

This sentiment was echoed across disciplines, with health sciences faculty noting particular difficulties with technical terminology that differs from everyday English usage. Participants observed that students' productive skills in writing and speaking were even more limited, hindering their ability to demonstrate content knowledge through assessments requiring English responses.

Faculty also acknowledged their own linguistic limitations, particularly regarding academic discourse and classroom management language. A natural sciences professor noted: "I am comfortable with the content terminology in English, but I struggle to explain complex concepts spontaneously when students don't understand. My teacher training was in Arabic, so I lack the pedagogical language in English." (Participant 7, Natural Sciences)

The data revealed that linguistic challenges had cascading effects on classroom dynamics, with teachers reporting reduced student participation, increased reliance on Arabic explanations, and difficulties maintaining English as the primary medium of instruction.

4.2. Pedagogical Adaptation Difficulties:

The second major challenge theme related to pedagogical adaptation, with participants reporting significant difficulties in modifying their teaching approaches for effective EMI implementation. Many faculty members described a mismatch between their established teaching methods and the demands of EMI classrooms.

A social sciences professor articulated this challenge: "My teaching style in Arabic is interactive, with much discussion and debate. In English, I find myself lecturing more because students cannot express their ideas fluently. The classroom becomes more teacher-centred than I would like." (Participant 19, Social Sciences)

Participants across disciplines reported uncertainty about how to balance content coverage with language support, with most acknowledging that they had received little guidance on this fundamental aspect of EMI pedagogy. Assessment presented particular challenges, as faculty struggled to distinguish between content understanding and language proficiency in student responses.

The data also revealed disciplinary variations in pedagogical challenges. Engineering and science faculty focused more on difficulties in explaining complex processes and technical applications, while social sciences and humanities faculty emphasized challenges in facilitating discussions of abstract concepts where precise language use is critical.

4.3. Resource and Institutional Support Limitations:

Participants consistently identified inadequate institutional support as a significant barrier to effective EMI implementation. This theme encompassed several subthemes, including insufficient training opportunities, limited teaching materials, and problematic policy implementation.

A medical faculty participant stated: "The university decided to implement EMI in our program, but provided only a short workshop for preparation. We need ongoing support, not just one-time training. Teaching in English requires different skills that take time to develop." (Participant 3, Medical Sciences)

Participants reported that existing professional development opportunities often focused on general English proficiency rather than the specific pedagogical skills needed for EMI. They also noted a shortage of appropriate teaching resources, with limited access to English-language textbooks that aligned with curriculum requirements.

The data revealed concerns about the inconsistent implementation of EMI policies across departments, creating confusion for both staff and students. Participants described a "gap between policy and practice," similar to that identified in Japanese contexts (Bradford, 2016), with top-down decision making that failed to account for classroom realities.

4.4. Cultural and Identity Concerns:

The fourth challenge theme is related to cultural and identity concerns associated with the adoption of English as a medium of instruction. Participants expressed ambivalence about

the relationship between English adoption and Arabic academic identity, noting tensions between practical necessities and cultural preservation.

A humanities professor articulated this tension: Arabic has a rich academic tradition, and I worry that exclusive use of English marginalizes this heritage. "We need to find a balance that allows students to access global knowledge while valuing our own intellectual traditions". (Participant 22, Social Sciences)

Participants also noted cultural dimensions of classroom interaction, observing that communicative patterns expected in English-medium classrooms sometimes conflicted with local educational traditions. Students accustomed to respectful listening rather than active challenging of ideas struggled with interactive approaches that required questioning and debate.

The data revealed that these cultural concerns were more prominent in social sciences and humanities disciplines, where content is often more culturally embedded, while STEM faculty focused more on practical linguistic challenges.

4.5. Emerging Solution Strategies:

Despite these challenges, participants identified several solution strategies developed through their teaching experiences. These emergent solutions represent practical approaches to managing EMI implementation difficulties.

Code-switching and translanguaging strategies were widely reported across disciplines, with faculty strategically using Arabic to clarify complex concepts or ensure understanding. An engineering professor explained: "I explain the core concept in English, then use Arabic to check understanding and address misconceptions. This hybrid approach helps bridge the gap while maintaining English as the primary medium." (Participant 9, Engineering)

Participants also described developing scaffolding techniques to support student comprehension, including visual aids, structured notes, and pre-teaching of key vocabulary. Many faculty members had created discipline-specific language materials to address gaps in available resources.

Collaborative approaches emerged as another solution strategy, with some departments establishing peer support networks for EMI teachers and developing shared resource banks. Participants emphasized the value of sharing practical experiences with colleagues facing similar challenges.

Table 2: Key Challenges and Emergent Solutions Identified by Participants

Challenge Category	Specific Challenges	Representative Contexts
Linguistic Preparedness	Limited student proficiency Teacher language gaps Technical vocabulary	Strategic code-switching Vocabulary scaffolding Structured input techniques
Pedagogical Adaptation	Teacher-centered approaches Assessment difficulties Balance of content and language	Interactive task design Criteria-referenced assessment Language-objective integration

Resource Limitations	Inadequate training Limited materials Inconsistent policy	Peer collaboration Materials development Advocacy for structured support
Cultural Concerns	Identity tensions Conflicting academic traditions Intercultural communication	Critical language awareness Cultural comparisons Inclusive pedagogy

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the transition to EMI at Saida University involves a complex interplay of linguistic, pedagogical, institutional, and cultural factors that collectively influence implementation effectiveness. These findings both confirm patterns identified in international EMI research and highlight context-specific considerations for the Algerian higher education environment.

5.1. Linguistic Challenges as Implementation Barriers:

The pervasive linguistic challenges identified in this study align with findings from multiple international contexts (Macaro et al., 2018). The limited English proficiency of both students and faculty represents a significant barrier to effective EMI implementation, supporting research that questions the assumption that content specialists can seamlessly transition to English-medium teaching without substantial linguistic support, which goes hand in hand with (Chapple, 2015) research. The cascading effects of linguistic limitations on classroom interaction and pedagogical choices underscore the interconnected nature of language and teaching practice in EMI settings.

The disciplinary variation in linguistic challenges underscores the critical importance of specialized EMI support. The prioritization of technical vocabulary in fields like engineering and health sciences contrasts sharply with the discursive demands of the social sciences, indicating that uniform language support strategies are inadequate. This need for tailored, rather than generic, language development is consistent with findings from studies such as Lavankura's (2013) in a Thai engineering setting.

5.2. Pedagogical Transformation Requirements:

The pedagogical adaptation difficulties reported by participants highlight the substantial instructional transformation required for effective EMI implementation. The tension between teacher-centred approaches necessitated by linguistic limitations and desired student-centred methods reflects a fundamental challenge in EMI contexts: the need to simultaneously develop language skills and content knowledge. This finding suggests that successful EMI implementation requires more than linguistic upskilling; it demands comprehensive pedagogical development that addresses the symbiotic relationship between language and content learning, which is similar to (Macaro, 2018) study.

The assessment challenges identified by participants point to the need for evaluation reform in EMI contexts. The difficulty in distinguishing content mastery from language proficiency in student performance underscores the importance of assessment strategies that accurately measure learning objectives while accounting for linguistic development. This

alignment between teaching methods and assessment practices represents a critical area for institutional support and professional development.

5.3. Institutional Support Systems:

The resource and institutional support limitations described by participants reflect common patterns in EMI implementation globally, particularly the gap between policy vision and practical reality, which is aligned with (Bradford, 2016) investigation. The top-down nature of many EMI initiatives appears particularly problematic when not accompanied by adequate consultation with implementation stakeholders. This finding suggests that successful EMI implementation requires collaborative policy development that incorporates faculty perspectives and addresses practical constraints.

The reported inadequacy of one-off training workshops aligns with research emphasising the need for sustained professional development in EMI contexts (Galloway et al., 2017). The complex interplay of linguistic, pedagogical, and disciplinary knowledge required for effective EMI teaching suggests that support programs must be ongoing, context-specific, and integrated into departmental cultures rather than isolated training events.

5.4. Cultural Identity Negotiation:

The cultural and identity concerns expressed by participants highlight the socio-political dimensions of EMI implementation that extend beyond practical pedagogical considerations. The tension between English adoption and Arabic academic identity reflects broader debates about linguistic ecology and knowledge production in higher education, which has also been found in (Earls, 2016) research. These concerns suggest that EMI implementation must be accompanied by critical discussions about language policy and knowledge sovereignty in Arab academic contexts.

The finding that cultural concerns were more prominent in social sciences and humanities disciplines underscores the disciplinary variation in EMI challenges and suggests the need for differentiated implementation approaches across academic fields. This disciplinary sensitivity aligns with the research of (Ivankova et al., 2006), which emphasises the content-specific nature of academic discourse and literacy practices.

5.5. Solution Strategies and Adaptive Practices:

The emergent solution strategies developed by participants represent valuable bottom-up approaches to EMI implementation that complement formal support structures. The strategic use of code-switching and translanguaging practices challenges monolingual assumptions about EMI and suggests the potential for pedagogical approaches that leverage students' full linguistic repertoires (Pun, 2019). These adaptive practices demonstrate teacher agency in responding to implementation challenges despite limited institutional support.

The collaborative approaches developed by participants, including peer support networks and shared resource development, highlight the importance of professional learning communities in educational innovation. These bottom-up support structures represent valuable resources that institutions might strengthen through formal recognition and support.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1. Recommendations:

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are offered for enhancing EMI implementation at Saida University and similar contexts:

For Institutional Policymakers:

1. Develop comprehensive EMI implementation plans that address linguistic, pedagogical and resource dimensions simultaneously rather than in isolation.
2. Establish sustained professional development programs that combine language enhancement with pedagogical training specific to EMI contexts.
3. Create disciplinary communities of practice that facilitate peer support and resource sharing among EMI teachers.
4. Implement staged introduction models that allow for a gradual transition to full EMI rather than abrupt implementation.

For Faculty and Departmental Leaders:

1. Develop department-specific EMI guidelines that acknowledge disciplinary variations in language demands and pedagogical approaches.
2. Create shared teaching resources, including visual supports, glossaries, and scaffolded materials that address common student difficulties.
3. Establish peer observation and feedback protocols focused specifically on EMI teaching challenges and strategies.
4. Advocate for balanced approaches that recognize the value of Arabic alongside English in knowledge construction and dissemination.

For Further Research:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies that track the development of EMI implementation over time, documenting evolving challenges and solutions.
2. Investigate student perspectives on EMI experiences to complement the teacher focus of this study.
3. Explore assessment practices in EMI contexts, developing approaches that accurately measure content learning while acknowledging language development.
4. Examine cross-disciplinary comparisons in greater depth to identify discipline-specific versus generalizable implementation strategies.

6.2. Conclusion:

This study has identified the key challenges and emergent solutions in transitioning to English-Medium Instruction at Saida University, Algeria. The findings reveal that EMI implementation involves a complex negotiation of linguistic resources, pedagogical skills, institutional support, and cultural identity. The challenges identified align with international patterns while highlighting context-specific considerations for the Algerian higher education environment.

The study contributes to EMI literature by documenting the adaptive strategies developed by teachers navigating implementation challenges, providing valuable insights into bottom-up approaches that complement formal support structures. The disciplinary variations in challenges and solutions underscore the importance of context-sensitive implementation approaches rather than one-size-fits-all models.

Theoretical implications include the need for more nuanced conceptualizations of EMI that account for the complex interplay between language proficiency, pedagogical expertise, and disciplinary epistemologies. The findings suggest that successful EMI implementation requires attention to both practical classroom concerns and broader questions about linguistic ecology and knowledge production in higher education.

7. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The focus on a single university limits generalizability, though the rich contextual insights provide transferable implications for similar settings. The exclusive focus on teacher perspectives, while valuable,

represents only one dimension of the EMI implementation picture. Future research incorporating student voices and classroom observations would provide complementary insights. Finally, the study captures EMI challenges at a particular implementation stage; longitudinal tracking would reveal how these challenges evolve.

In conclusion, successful EMI implementation at Saida University and similar institutions requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the interconnected linguistic, pedagogical, institutional, and cultural dimensions identified in this study. By building on teachers' adaptive strategies and providing sustained institutional support, universities can navigate the complexities of the EMI transition while maintaining educational quality and cultural relevance.

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