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Teachers' Attitudes Towards English as a Medium of Instruction: A Case Study

مواقف المعلمين تجاه اللغة الإنجليزية كوسيلة للتدريس: دراسة حالة

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Abstract:

Due to globalization and English's widespread use, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has grown in popularity among higher education institutions worldwide in recent years. Taking the case of Algeria, the present study endeavours to explore teachers' viewpoint towards the implementation of English, highlighting the challenges encountered therein. In doing so, a descriptive quantitative approach has been adopted through a questionnaire designed to 20 teachers in the faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences at the University of Khemis Miliana. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers had a positive attitude towards EMI; underlining EMI's potential for scholarly advancement and international recognition. The study also highlights obstacles faced by teachers in implementing EMI, which must be addressed for successful implementation in the faculty.

Keywords: Attitude; English as a Medium of Instruction; teachers; university.

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ملخص:

نتيجةً للعولمة وانتشار استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية، ازدادت شعبية استخدامها كلغة تدريس في مؤسسات التعليم العالي حول العالم في السنوات الأخيرة. وبالنظر إلى الجزائر، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وجهة نظر المعلمين تجاه تطبيق اللغة الإنجليزية، مع تسليط الضوء على التحديات التي تواجههم. ولتحقيق ذلك، تم اعتماد منهج وصفي كمي من خلال استبيان وُزِّع على 20 معلما في كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية والإدارية بجامعة خميس مليانة. وكشفت النتائج أن غالبية المعلمين لديهم موقف إيجابي تجاه استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة تدريس، مما يؤكد إمكاناتها في تعزيز التقدم الأكاديمي والاعتراف الدولي. كما تُبرز الدراسة العقبات التي يواجهها المعلمون في تطبيق هذه اللغة، والتي يجب معالجتها لضمان نجاح تطبيقها في الكلية.

كلمات مفتاحية: الموقف؛ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة تدريس؛ المعلمون؛ الجامعة.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rather than being used just as a language, English is used as a medium of instruction for various courses in the school curriculum in many non-English speaking countries. English is now required to be studied at all educational levels, including primary, middle, secondary, and university, as it is viewed as a catalyst for both intellectual and economic progress. An rising number of higher education institutions (HEIs) have chosen to teach all or some of their disciplines in English due to the language's widespread usage in academia and science across the

globe as well as the increasing internationalization of higher education. This language is used as an instructional medium (EMI) in higher education in addition to functioning as the standard language for scholarly and scientific discourse. English is used as the medium of teaching in both English-speaking and English as a Second Language (ESL) countries, as well as in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries like Algeria.

Algeria's current educational system promotes the use of English, just as that of many other countries. The transition to EMI in higher education was influenced by development, globalization, economic opportunity, and political considerations. This improvement not only increases the allure of Algerian educational institutions to international scholars and students, but it also improves overall teaching and learning standards and fosters a more global mindset among students.

Numerous institutions in Algeria have responded to the increasing need for English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) by offering specialized courses that incorporate EMI into the teaching and learning process for subjects other than English Subject Matter Instructions (SMIs).This modification raises important queries, such as: What impressions do educators have of English being used as a medium of instruction? Do they encounter difficulties when employing English as a teaching language?

2. What is EMI?

The definition of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) varies depending on context. According to Hellekjaer (2010), teaching non-linguistic courses in English to students for whom it is a

second language includes political science, physics, and medicine. A lecturer whose native language is not English (L1) typically teaches it Additionally, Macaro (2018) defined EMI as imparting knowledge on various subjects in countries or areas where English is not spoken as a first language by the majority of individuals (L1). Put differently, it seems that non-anglophone nations are rapidly shifting from instructing academic subjects in English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as the medium of instruction (EMI). Nicola and Heath (2021) have proposed multiple definitions of EMI that attempt to expand its meaning to encompass Anglophone circumstances, given that the increasing proportion of L2 English speakers in these universities has generated multilingual educational contexts. However, there is constant disagreement about how comparable these situations are to one another.

The significance of English language development in EMI contexts and the extent to which the existing definitional scope is too narrow due to its exclusion of English-medium educational practices in Anglophone settings are topics of debate. Pecorari and Malmström (2018) noted, for example, that some EMI scholars use a broader use of the term, referring to contexts where English is the primary language and when initiatives are taken to actively foster the development of English as a second language. Baker and Hüttner (2016) concluded that removing Anglophone settings from EMI would be "unhelpful" (p. 502). Likewise, the experiences of bilingual and multilingual students who study in Anglophone universities with their second language (L2) are excluded. Because it is semantically larger and does not refer to a specific educational approach or research objective, Dafouz and Smit (2016) propose the acronym EMEMUS, or English-Medium

Education in Multilingual University Settings (p. 399). According to Dearden (2015), EMI is currently a rising worldwide phenomena that affects educational settings at all levels. One could argue that the word "EMI" refers to a broad spectrum of academic courses that are instructed in English without mentioning the goal of helping students' English. This word is frequently used, particularly in higher education. Consequently, Lasagabaster et al. (2014) noted that an increasing number of universities worldwide are rushing to provide undergraduate and graduate degrees in English.

3. Challenges of EMI Implementation

Despite being the primary language of instruction, there are still a lot of disagreements among educators about the use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in subject-specific education. Bradford (2016) identified four types of barriers: linguistic, cultural, structural, and identity-related (institutional). These categories are present in EMI.

The language-related challenges that instructors and students in EMI programs encounter are known as linguistic barriers. Hellekjr (2010) claims that when course material is delivered in English, non-native students may find it difficult to understand the accented English spoken by native lecturers. Due to their limited English skills, they have further trouble with EMI since they are unable to comprehend published scholarly works written in the English language. Students' low level of engagement during the lecture is a result of their inadequate English proficiency. It is a challenge for the instructor to think through how pupils who are not as proficient will be able to catch up with

the lesson throughout this portion of the teaching and learning process.

The mismatch between the traits and expectations of domestic and international students is what Bradford (2016) identified as cultural problems. The knowledge of the EMI instructors and lecturers is a significant factor determining these difficulties. at relation to King's (2013) results, a British speaker might be acquainted with an especially natural method of conveying information; nevertheless, this method is not thought to be the dominant dynamic at a Thai school where kids would rather be passive learners. Furthermore, curricula and learning resources are often chosen from different linguistic and cultural settings when English is the medium of teaching, as indicated by Negash (2006). The resources could therefore be out of date from a cultural perspective and unsuitable for the pupils' level of language proficiency .

According to Bradford (2016), a lack of EMI courses and support staff members' inability to work with diverse groups were two structural obstacles to overall programmatic coherence. Because they lack confidence due to limited funds or training, prospective EMI instructors are hesitant, according to Byun et al. (2011). Institutional resources prevent administrators and aspiring EMI lecturers from meeting their high standards for EMI course teaching ability, which is why there is a correlation between language barriers and a lack of confidence.

Bradford (2016) draws the conclusion that the EMI program's external perception, identity, teaching staff, and student enrollment are all tied to the identity-related (institutional) problem. As a fundamental element of EMI policy, globally-

oriented higher education establishments are growing increasingly preoccupied with their institutional identity, particularly in relation to how it is perceived in worldwide rankings.

4. **EMI in Algerian Universities**

Algerian society revolves around living there during a turning point in history. In the country, people frequently discuss language in conversation. Several people have expressed their disapproval of the French language, that has been widely used in Algeria for almost 150 years—that is, from the start of the popular movement. Algerians believe that English should replace French in the country since French is the language of the invaders and not a global business language. Rachid Harraoubia, a former minister of higher education, introduced the idea of changing the language used in classrooms (2010). He announced that his department was investigating the possibility of switching from French to English, particularly in the areas of science and technology. University rectors were invited to assist the exploratory process last year by Tayeb Bouzid, formerly the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in order to promote and broaden the usage of English at Algerian universities. Official documentation ought to be written in both Arabic and English, claims Ghanmi (2019). The purpose of this is to promote and support the use of English as well as increase public knowledge of academic and scientific initiatives in higher education. He continued by implying that knowing French would not advance one. Following the decision to designate English as Algeria's official foreign language in lieu of French, Ghanmi (2019) reports that there was a contentious

debate about the country's strong linguistic and cultural ties to France.

Higher education authorities in Algeria face hardships as a result of the expanding Englishization trend. They admit that to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, Algerian higher education needs to change gradually and dramatically. This action aims to align Algerian institutions with contemporary global education trends and enhance their worldwide status. In view of the growing significance of the controversy over utilizing English as the language of instruction and scientific research, discussions on enhancing English competence with the university community and the Algerian people are required (Kaddari & Mazouzi, 2022).

French remained the official language of Algeria, despite the fact that Arabization had rendered all Algerian institutions non-English by the early 1980s. In tertiary education, French is still taught in classrooms and utilized as an additional language for administrative procedures, according to Benrabah (2007). Because of this, Algerian authorities felt compelled to make more efforts toward globalizing higher education in order to meet the needs of the twenty-first century and secure the highest possible international standing. To preserve English's standing and bring Algerian higher education up to par with other countries, university teachers must become more fluent in the language.

The phenomenon of "Englishization," which has becoming more prevalent in countries where English is not the official language, is not unique to Algeria. English is becoming more and more discussed as the language of instruction and research as higher education administrators deal with this trend. (Kadi, 2022).

In Algerian universities, an early experiment using EMI was done. At three Algerian universities, teaching via EMI is currently an option. In 1976, the Boumerdes Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering was founded as the first one. Amani and Sarra (2023) state that the National Schools of Mathematics and Artificial Intelligence are the other two, and they are situated in Algiers and have been in operation since 2021.

The initiative was revealed on Facebook on August 20 by Minister of Higher Education Tayeb Bouzid, according to the Algerian news outlet Echoroukonline. In order to provide suggestions for encouraging the use of English in education and research, he suggested the creation of a think tank made up of academics and government officials. In order to lessen Algerian higher education's reliance on French, the language of the former colonial authority, Bouzid has been a strong proponent of making English the main language of instruction. As rector of the University of "Batna 2," he had previously advocated for a gradual shift from French to English. English will be the main medium of instruction for courses in science, technology, medicine, and other areas beginning in September 2023, according to a recent announcement made by Kamel Beddari, Minister of Scientific Research and Higher Education.

Teachers at the B2 level were required to teach English, while those at the other levels were requested to complete their English language education, according to a letter sent on May 18, 2023, to the rectors of the Algerian institutions.

All Algerian universities were asked to provide a report on the planned preparations for the decision's implementation by July 1st, 2023, in accordance with the Minister's instructions and in

anticipation of the adoption of English as a medium of teaching. A competent committee will evaluate the events the same month.

University rectors were requested to expedite the procedures associated with the hiring of English-speaking teaching staff for Intensive Languages Teaching Centers or Distance Education, in compliance with the Minister's directives from October 23rd, which represented the sector's actual attempt to implement teaching in the language. To become qualified to instruct in a range of educational environments, they can also pursue a licensing degree or enroll in private universities.

5. Methods

In order to achieve the study's goal of examining teachers' opinions regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction, a structured survey questionnaire was made available online to 23 instructors at Khemis Miliana University's faculty of economic, commercial, and management sciences. The teachers completed the questionnaire using Google Form, an online survey tool that makes the creation, distribution, and gathering of responses simple. A faculty-related Facebook page was used as a communication tool. Instructions on how to complete the survey were provided in detail to the participants. To increase the response rate, the survey was designed and distributed in English to make it as accessible as possible. However, it was required to translate the questionnaire into Arabic due to the low response rate and the requirement to guarantee an acceptable number for relevant analysis. Three major areas are covered in the questionnaire: teachers' opinions regarding the implementation of EMI, how EMI is perceived, and difficulties that arise when implementing EMI.

6. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Perceptions towards English as a medium of instruction

N^0	Statement	Disagree	Strongly diagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
01	EMI is a Means for ongoing professional development and skills enhancement.	2	3	2	13	3
02	EMI is an opportunity for international collaboration and enhances research output.	1	1	2	12	7
03	Teaching more programs in English will raise academic standards at the University	4	5	3	5	6
04	The adoption of EMI engages the Algerian University in Worldwide ranking	2	2	6	9	4
05	EMI programs is piloted by discipline and monitoring effectiveness	3	4	6	8	2

06	EMI helps students gain opportunities for studying abroad	1	1	2	12	7
07	Teachers English proficiency is inadequate for full EMI implementation	1	2	2	11	7
08	The change to EMI seems abrupt without sufficient preparation.	1	0	4	9	9
09	EMI training program is an additional burden on top of existing large teaching loads.	1	2	4	6	10
10	Students English proficiency is inadequate for full EMI implementation	1	3	3	6	10

The findings displayed in the above table indicate that EMI is typically seen favorably in terms of chances for study abroad, international collaboration, professional development, and research output. But there are issues with kids' and instructors' English language skills, the suddenness of the change, and the extra strain that EMI training places on the workload of teachers. These results point out areas in which the university's implementation of EMI needs more work and assistance.

Table2: Teachers Attitudes towards the Implementation of EMI

N^0	Statement	diagree	Strongly diagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
01	Teaching contents in English is a good experience	1	1	7	10	4
02	The subjects of the International class program are well coordinated	1	5	14	2	1
03	preserving cultural knowledge transmission in the curriculum is a concern without proper safeguards	1	2	7	9	4
04	EMI can succeed in preserving local identity	3	4	7	6	3
05	Delivering subject matters lessons in English would make them less interesting	1	4	7	4	7

Based on these results, it is evident that most respondents think that teaching.

English-language content is a positive experience and that maintaining the transmission of cultural knowledge is a worry that has to be properly protected.

On the other hand, perspectives on how well the courses are coordinated in the international class program, how well EMI

preserves local identity, and how teaching subject matter in English affects students' interest are less widely held.

Knowing these attitudes can assist guide decisions and possible courses of action to resolve issues or enhance benefits associated with the subject under study.

Table 3: Challenges encounter by teachers in adopting EMI

N^0	**Statement**	**diagree**	**Strongly diagree**	**Neutral**	**agree**
01	Switching from teaching inArabic to teaching in English is a major challenge	1	1	2	8
02	Pedagogical skills were also identified as a major challenge for EMI implementation.	0	1	5	9
03	Teaching in English requires a different approach than teaching in Arabic.	0	0	6	7
04	The institution does not provide enough support for EMI implementation.	0	4	6	9
05	The instructor's lack of English proficiency	0	1	7	10
06	Teaching in English could lead to a wider gap between students' levels of ability	0	0	4	11
07	Teaching in English creates a better link between the	3	2	9	7

	teaching and the course material				
08	It is difficult to replace Arabic with English in classroom communication	0	0	4	9
09	The students' comprehension problems when delivering the material by using English	0	0	3	8
10	Time is spent in instructing the students in the specialized jargon and vocabulary.	0	1	3	8
11	There is pressure from curriculum to meet targets with effective adoption of English	0	0	5	8
12	The lack of appropriate in-service training for teachers on to how to teach and how to conduct researches in English.	0	0	4	8
13	The lack of appropriate in-service training for teachers on how to conduct projects in English.	0	0	6	12

The findings show that teachers have a favorable outlook on the difficulties involved in implementing EMI. Thirteen items total with various approval ratings are in this section. Significant difficulties and worries about the switch from teaching in Arabic to teaching in English were highlighted by the findings. These difficulties include a variety of issues, including inadequate institutional support and educational expertise. The study's main

findings included instructor English competency and possible student ability discrepancies. The results of this study suggest that most teachers have communication issues that are caused by a lack of scientific vocabulary knowledge, pressure from the curriculum, and inadequate training. For English to be used as a medium of instruction successfully, it is imperative that these issues be addressed and that teachers receive the necessary assistance and training.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate how instructors felt about using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). It also aimed to pinpoint the difficulties encountered when utilizing EMI in an educational context. A questionnaire that was sent to twenty-three teachers at the University of Khemis Miliana's faculty of Economic, Commercial, and Management Sciences was modified to use a quantitative method in order to accomplish the study's goal. The study's conclusions demonstrated that instructors at the Faculty of Economic, Commercial, and Management Sciences typically had a favorable attitude toward the application of EMI, indicating that the study's first question was satisfactorily addressed. The study revealed many obstacles that educators have while attempting to include EMI, even when they are aware of its potential advantages. The need of resolving these obstacles to guarantee successful implementation and optimize the potential advantages was confirmed by the results, which addressed the second issue.

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