

Exploring the Use of English as a Language for Disseminating Academic PhD Paper The Case of Non-EFL PhD Candidates.

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Abstract:

Algeria, a multilingual country with a diverse sociolinguistic profile, is undergoing a significant transition in language education, with English emerging as a dominant medium of instruction in higher education. This paper investigates the increasing use of English for drafting and publishing research papers among non-EFL PhD candidates. It examines the advantages of this shift, identifies the inherent challenges, and suggests strategies to support candidates in developing their academic writing skills. Through a mixed-methods approach involving an online questionnaire, the study explores the needs of non-EFL PhD candidates and provides insights into fostering their linguistic and methodological competencies. The findings offer actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Algeria's higher education system.

Keywords: English Medium Instruction (EMI), Non- EFL PhD Candidates, academic writing, Algeria, ESP course.

Introduction:

English has established itself as the global lingua franca of science and technology, fundamentally shaping academic communication and research dissemination worldwide. According to recent estimates, over 98% of scientific publications are authored in English, underscoring its dominance as the primary language of scholarly discourse. The widespread adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has become a hallmark of higher education reform in many non-English-dominant countries, driven by the need to enhance global competitiveness, foster international collaboration, and improve access to cutting-edge scientific knowledge.

In Asia, for instance, countries such as South Korea, Malaysia, and China have integrated EMI into their education systems to bolster academic mobility and establish regional hubs for global students. Similarly, in Europe, nations like Sweden and the Netherlands have embraced English-taught programs to attract international talent and align with global academic standards. However, these transitions are not without challenges. Studies have documented issues such as disparities in linguistic competence among students and faculty, the marginalization of local languages, and the potential for EMI to create inequities in access to quality education.

Algeria, as a multilingual country with a rich sociolinguistic heritage, has joined this global movement by gradually incorporating EMI into its higher education system. Historically reliant on French as the primary language of instruction and academic research, Algeria's language policies have reflected its colonial legacy. For decades, French dominated academic and professional settings, serving as the medium of instruction for scientific disciplines such as engineering, medicine, and economics. Arabic, as the national and official language, has been central to cultural and political identity, while English was relegated to secondary status as a foreign language.

The Algerian higher education context presents a distinctive set of challenges for doctoral candidates undertaking thesis composition in English, which diverge substantially from those documented in other international contexts. Algeria's tertiary education system functions predominantly through French and Arabic, with English only recently emerging as a language of scholarship in scientific disciplines. Consequently, non-EFL doctoral students engage with English-medium thesis writing as third or fourth language users, typically lacking systematic exposure to English academic discourse conventions throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate coursework. This linguistic complexity is further exacerbated by systemic institutional deficiencies, including the absence of dedicated English academic writing support infrastructure, inadequate access to Anglophone supervisory expertise, limited availability of English-language scholarly resources, and the entrenchment of francophone rhetorical traditions that diverge from Anglo-American academic conventions. The recent internationalization imperative in Algerian higher education, which mandates English-language publication as a prerequisite for doctoral completion, has intensified these pressures without commensurate development of support mechanisms. This convergence of factors—a multilingual educational environment, postcolonial influences on academic practices, accelerated transition toward English as a research language, and insufficient institutional capacity—constitutes a unique constellation of barriers that resists straightforward transposition of research findings from contexts with more established English academic literacy frameworks. Investigating these context-specific challenges is therefore crucial for formulating pedagogically sound, culturally situated interventions that address the complex realities of multilingual doctoral writing in Algeria.

In recent years, Algeria has recognized the strategic importance of English in achieving its goals of

internationalizing higher education and integrating into the global academic community. This recognition has prompted a policy shift to promote the use of English in academia, particularly in doctoral programs. The launch of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) initiatives reflects a broader ambition to modernize the country's higher education system and align it with global standards. As part of these efforts, English is now being introduced not only as a subject but also as the language of instruction for academic subjects and research dissemination in select programs.

This paper focuses on the emerging practice of using English for drafting and publishing PhD theses among non-EFL (English as a Foreign Language) candidates in Algeria. These doctoral students, traditionally educated in French, face a unique set of challenges as they navigate this linguistic transition. While the benefits of adopting English are evident, including greater access to international literature, enhanced global visibility, and opportunities for collaboration, the process is fraught with difficulties. Linguistic barriers, methodological gaps, and a lack of institutional support create significant obstacles for non-EFL doctoral researchers.

This study seeks to address these critical questions:

- What are the benefits of using academic English in thesis writing for non-EFL candidates?
- What challenges hinder the writing process?
- What specific needs should be addressed to support non-EFL PhD candidates?
- How does drafting theses in English contribute to the broader implementation of EMI in Algeria?

By addressing these questions, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the experiences of non-EFL PhD candidates in Algeria and explores strategies to enhance their academic and linguistic preparedness. This analysis contributes to the broader discourse on EMI and its implications in non-English-dominant countries, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers

working to support the successful adoption of EMI in multilingual settings.

Significance of the Study:

This study aims to address the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algeria's higher education system, as the country transitions from French to English as the dominant academic language. It highlights systemic barriers faced by doctoral students, such as insufficient ESP training, limited institutional resources, and inadequate language preparation during earlier stages of education. The findings can guide policymakers in designing and implementing comprehensive EMI frameworks tailored to the Algerian context, including reforms in curriculum design, extended ESP programs, and targeted investment in training instructors and supervisors.

Educators are encouraged to adopt student-centered strategies, such as needs-based course design, scaffolded instruction, and hands-on workshops that focus on research methodology and advanced academic writing skills. These strategies will empower non-EFL PhD candidates to overcome linguistic and technical barriers, enabling them to produce high-quality research aligned with international standards.

Researchers benefit from this study by offering unique insights into the Algerian context, highlighting the sociolinguistic implications of the transition, including the potential marginalization of French and the need to maintain a balanced linguistic ecosystem that values Arabic as a national identity marker.

The findings contribute to the ongoing conversation on the adoption of EMI in non-English-dominant countries, providing valuable lessons for other nations with similar linguistic landscapes. By identifying actionable strategies to support non-EFL PhD candidates, this study serves as a model for addressing the linguistic and methodological challenges of EMI adoption in comparable contexts.

Finally, the study underscores the importance of fostering a supportive environment for doctoral students navigating the shift to English, improving Algeria's higher education system quality, and enhancing its global academic standing.

1. Conceptual Framework:

1.1 English as a Language of Scientific Research in Algeria:

English is established as the lingua franca of science as "today 98% of publications in science are written in English." (English Dominates Scientific Research). English imposed itself in the field of scientific research worldwide. It is "by far the most important language of scientific and scholarly journals." (Ammon, 2001, p.26).

Conducting research in English is undoubtedly vital. In this, scientists all around the world can "gain access to the vast scientific literature and can communicate with other scientists anywhere in the world." (Drubin and Kellog, 2012, p.1399). Accordingly, researchers are offered a variety of scientific data which not only facilitates the process of research but also intensifies it. There is a remarkable growth in the use of English in scientific enterprise. "International patents are now overwhelmingly filed in English-online postings of research, post-doctoral fellowships, new databases and other resources and international grants"(Scott, 2013, p.4) all now utilize English.

The global prominence of English as the preferred language of scientific research has profoundly influenced the Algerian research community, compelling them to adapt to this international standard. Historically reliant on French, Algerian researchers are now navigating the shift toward English, which offers broader access to global scientific literature and facilitates international collaborations. Throughout the history of scientific research in Algeria, it is prima facie noticed that French is perceived as the medium of research for the scientific branches like biology, engineering,

computing, maths, economics.....etc. English, however, was instructed as a compulsory subject dealing with general English. This fact "fails since learners did not acquire the linguistic knowledge of the language." (Ghounane, 2023, p.205). Viewed in this way, "ESP courses were introduced to the new curriculum depending on the learners' needs to study English related to their domains of research." (Ghounane, 2023, p.205). In this respect, ESP refers to the "teaching of English for clearly utilitarian purposes." (Mackay and Mountford, 1978, p.2). These purposes may be academic, professional, or scientific.

To widen the scope of utilizing English in tertiary education, Algeria opted for a new direction as it launched a grandiose project: EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction). The latter refers to "the teaching of academic subjects, other than English itself, in English an educational setting where English is not the first language." (Macaro, 2018, p.10). EMI is often regarded as having an interbred asset permitting students to consummate both the language (English) and their knowledge about the subject matter (content language) (Rose et al., 2019, p. 2150).

1.2 The PhD Thesis:

The PhD thesis is the paramount part of a doctoral research degree; the acme of four or more years of unremitting work towards fabricating a genuine contribution to one's area of study. As Taylor puts it, "PhD thesis is a work of original research all students are required to submit to successfully complete their PhD. The thesis details the research that you carried out during the course of your doctoral degree and highlights the outcomes and conclusions reached." Manns defines a PhD dissertation as "a compilation of academic and practical knowledge, and in many cases, it can be the student's first publication." The two definitions establish the PhD thesis as a requirement of a PhD, a technical work that documents the research findings the PhD students had outstretched.

Barett et al.(2021) accommodated a more comprehensive definition of the PhD thesis etching its structure:

A thesis is a self-contained monograph written by the student which:

1. Sets out the problem and context of the research, including theoretical perspectives.
2. Outlines existing approaches that have addressed the problem or related issues before, typically by undertaking a thorough critical analysis of literature and identifying a gap in the evidence.
3. Justify and critically evaluate the research methodologies and methods chosen to address the problem.
4. Presents the findings of the research and how they add to existing knowledge.
5. Makes recommendations as to how the findings can advance the discipline and improve practice, and/or suggest further research directions. (p. 1)

After having set the objective of the research, acknowledging the existing research and shaping the work through a detailed review is imperative. The next step will be the assessment of the research methods excerpted. The latter, constituting one's original contribution to the knowledge, will uncover more about the potential for further research in the field or even outside academia. Acknowledging the limitations of the research is inescapable. Not highlighted above given that it is the groundwork of a literature review, buy the very end, a comprehensive list of all that has been used in the study. Providing additional information is put in the form of an appendix.

1.3 Drafting the PhD thesis for Non-EFL students:

A Multi-Faceted Process:

Academic writing is of capital prominence in producing a well-refined PhD dissertation. The process is indeed all-inclusive. It expands to incorporating certain vocabulary pertinent to the field of research with accurate use of grammar structures. Research methodology is no exclusion in that vein.

Academic writing, also referred to as scientific writing constitutes "all the principles considered while reporting an

academic research and the process of textualizing it" (Bahar, 2014, p.213). In clearer terms, "Academic writing is a formal understandable written expression of one's own evidence-based perspectives on a given topic, question or subject." (University of Leeds, 2019). Objectivity, precision, clarity, accountability, formality, explicitly, complexity, organization, and planning are agreed upon to characterize academic writing. The process of scientific writing dictates the use of purely technical words. Academic writing should be selective and choose words that coincide with the purpose of writing. Bearing in mind that the ultimate aim of academic writing is to communicate an argument perspicuously and assuredly, writers should avoid using obsolete words or clichés rather recommended to make use of precise and words.

To express oneself correctly and appropriately, some areas of English grammar need to be mastered. Grammar features include accuracy, which "can be measured by investing the correct use of subject-verb agreement, tenses, articles, prepositions." (Imani and Habil, 2012, p.462), grammatical complexity (which entails that academic texts should be neither "overcomplicated nor too simple"), and grammatical variety which is about "applying various syntactic structures in a text to avoid a monotonous writing style." (Imani and Habil, 2012, p.463).

Research methodology is "an approach to methodically explain the research problem" (Swarooprani, 2022, p.537). Any researcher must be committed to adopting different steps while studying his research problem along with the logic after them. Particularities pertinent to the research process, research approaches and methods, types of research, and the objective of research are to be swamped by academic writers while drafting their research papers.

2. Literature Review:

This literature review adopts a narrative approach with comparative synthesis, examining the implementation of

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) across multilingual contexts, with particular emphasis on Algeria. The review was conducted through systematic searches of academic databases (ERIC, Google Scholar, and Web of Science) using key terms including "EMI implementation," "ESP in higher education," "doctoral writing," "academic writing challenges," "multilingual contexts," and "Algeria higher education." The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024, supplemented by recent policy documents from Algerian universities. Sources were selected based on their relevance to: (1) EMI/ESP implementation in multilingual settings, (2) challenges faced by non-native English speakers in academic writing, and (3) doctoral student experiences in contexts comparable to Algeria. The review synthesizes empirical findings across multiple contexts—Algeria, Tunisia, Japan, Korea, Turkey, Malaysia, and Egypt—to identify common patterns, context-specific challenges, and transferable solutions relevant to the Algerian experience.

The research area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in multilingual contexts has garnered considerable attention in recent years, as educational systems worldwide adapt to the demands of globalization. Algeria's integration of EMI reflects broader trends seen in other non-English-dominant countries, where English is increasingly adopted as the language of academia and research. However, the shift to EMI in these contexts often reveals common challenges, such as insufficient linguistic preparation, inadequate teacher training, and resistance to change from entrenched linguistic traditions.

In Tunisia, as an instance, a more similar multilingual terrain to that of Algeria, EMI is perceived positively by both students and instructors. Abdeljaoued (2023) investigated the adoption of EMI in higher education from a Tunisian standpoint. Using a mixed data collection approach,

Abdeljaoued explored the attitudes of students towards the implementation of EMI along with the challenges encountered in the current courses moderated through English. The study concluded that the most notable obstacles vary from instructors' and students' low language proficiency, lack of writing and communicative skills, cultural adjustment challenges, lack of institutional support. Abdeljaoued suggested extensive in-service professional ,multilingual and pedagogical training as a solution to accelerate the shift from French to English. Algeria may well foster a more successful implementation of EMI following the Tunisian model.

In Japan, both government policy and university efforts aim at enriching the process of educational internalization and establishing top-tier universities. Research by Yu et al. (2023) concluded that the implementation of EMI in Japan must surpass the initial single policy goals limited to promoting "the global competitiveness of higher education." (Yu et al. 2023). The policy prime concerns have switched to hiring highly competent instructors and research experts along with boosting the quality of teaching and research levels of the domestic universities. This shift in redirecting EMI goals can help the Algeria policy makers to reconsider the current aims so as to foster the implementation of EMI.

Another context wherein EMI is implemented is Korea. Byun et al. (2011) presented the findings of a research conducted at the University of Korea. The research linked the success of EMI implementation to addressing three key areas; the language proficiencies of both students and teachers, the differing requirements of the diverse academic subjects and an efficacious flexible body that can patronize the application of EMI.

In Malaysia, for example, the adoption of EMI in higher education has been part of a strategic effort to position the country as a regional hub for international students. Despite its successes, studies highlight significant challenges, including students' varying levels of English proficiency and

the need for ongoing training for educators to effectively deliver content in English (Ali, 2013). These issues resonate with the Algerian experience, where non-EFL PhD candidates grapple with similar disparities in language competence and institutional support. However, Malaysia's development of detailed EMI policies, coupled with investments in faculty development and curriculum reform, offers valuable lessons for Algeria's EMI implementation.

In Turkey, another multilingual context with a historical reliance on French and Turkish in academia, the introduction of EMI has been met with both enthusiasm and resistance. Research by Çetinsaya (2014) shows that while EMI has expanded access to international academic networks, it has also created inequities among students and faculty, particularly those with limited prior exposure to English. To mitigate these issues, Turkish universities have introduced extensive English preparatory programs and integrated ESP courses into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. Similar strategies could be adopted in Algeria to address the linguistic and methodological challenges faced by non-EFL doctoral candidates.

The literature on ESP in Algeria highlights persistent challenges that hinder its effective implementation. Ghounane (2023) notes that while ESP courses were introduced to bridge the gap between general English proficiency and field-specific needs, their impact has been limited by poorly designed curricula, insufficient teacher training, and a lack of resources tailored to the needs of doctoral students. These issues are compounded by the nascent state of EMI in Algeria, which has yet to be uniformly implemented across universities. The need for customized ESP programs that address the specific requirements of academic writing, research methodology, and field-specific vocabulary remains a critical priority.

Recent studies, such as those by Boudjemaa (2021), emphasize the centrality of academic writing for non-EFL doctoral students, highlighting frequent challenges with

grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and the use of technical vocabulary. These difficulties align with findings in other multilingual contexts, where researchers often struggle to meet the linguistic and rhetorical demands of English academic writing. For instance, in Tunisia, where France has historically dominated academia, the introduction of EMI has revealed similar gaps in students’ ability to produce research papers that meet international standards (Ben Ayed, 2018). These parallels reinforce the importance of comprehensive language training programs that go beyond surface-level grammar instruction to include advanced writing techniques and research skills.

Comparatively, Algeria’s linguistic landscape is further complicated by its colonial history and the coexistence of Arabic, French, and Berber languages. While the transition to EMI aims to enhance global academic visibility, it also raises concerns about the marginalization of French and the preservation of Arabic as a national and cultural identity marker. Studies on EMI adoption in other multilingual contexts, such as Morocco and Egypt, suggest that successful implementation depends on striking a balance between embracing English for global integration and preserving local linguistic and cultural heritage (Masri, 2020).

The table below synthesizes the key themes, challenges, and solutions identified across the reviewed contexts, highlighting both commonalities and context-specific variations that inform the Algerian case.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of EMI Implementation Across Multilingual Contexts:

Context	Linguistic Background	Primary Challenges	Solutions Implemented	Relevance to Algeria
Tunisia (Abdeljaoued, 2023)	Arabic-French bilingualism, recent EMI adoption	• Low English proficiency • Inadequate writing/communication skills • Cultural	• In-service professional development • Multilingual pedagogical training	High: Very similar linguistic profile and

		adjustment issues • Lack of institutional support	• Systematic support structures	colonial history; directly transferable solutions
Japan (Yu et al., 2023)	Japanese monolingual dominance	• Quality of instruction concerns • Need for competent EMI instructors • Research capacity limitations	• Hiring highly qualified instructors • Focus on teaching/research quality over mere internationalization • Policy reorientation	Moderate : Different linguistic context but valuable policy framework for moving beyond rhetoric to substantive reform
Korea (Byun et al., 2011)	Korean monolingual dominance	• Variable student/teacher English proficiency • Discipline-specific requirements • Need for flexible governance	• Proficiency assessments • Discipline-tailored approaches • Flexible institutional frameworks	Moderate : Governance and discipline-specific insights applicable despite different linguistic background
Malaysia (Ali, 2013)	Multilingual (Malay, English, Chinese, Tamil)	• Variable English proficiency levels • Educator training needs • Curriculum adaptation	• Detailed EMI policies • Faculty development investments • Curriculum reform	Moderate-High : Multilingual context offers relevant policy and training models
Turkey (Çetinsaya, 2014)	Turkish-French historical influence	• Inequities among students/faculty • Limited English exposure	• English preparatory programs • Integrated ESP courses	High : Similar historical French influence;

		• Access to international networks	• Systematic pre-university preparation	preparator y programs directly applicable
Algeria (Ghoumane, 2023; Boudjemaa, 2021)	Arabic-French-Berber trilingualism	• Poorly designed ESP curricula • Insufficient teacher training • Lack of doctoral-specific resources • Grammar, structure, vocabulary challenges • Uneven EMI implementation	• Need for customized ESP programs • Advanced writing training • Research methodology support • Institutional standardization	Context of study: Requires contextualized solutions drawing from successful international models

While existing literature provides valuable insights into the challenges of EMI and ESP in Algeria and comparable settings, there is a notable gap in research focusing specifically on the unique needs of non-EFL PhD candidates drafting theses in English. This study aims to address this gap by examining the linguistic, methodological, and psychological dimensions of this complex process. By drawing on lessons from other multilingual contexts and analyzing the Algerian experience—shaped by its particular colonial legacy, current trilingual reality, and recent EMI policy shifts—this study contributes to the growing body of research on EMI implementation and offers practical, contextualized recommendations for improving the implementation of EMI in Algeria’s higher education system.

3. Methodology and Tools:

To explore the challenges and opportunities associated with using English for PhD thesis drafting, this study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. The primary research tool was a structured online questionnaire, designed to capture participants’ linguistic proficiency, perceptions of English as

a Medium of Instruction (EMI), and experiences with academic writing in English. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the participants' challenges and needs, while the use of both closed-ended and open-ended questions facilitated a nuanced analysis of their responses.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section focused on demographic information, including age, gender, field of study, and years of doctoral study. This data provided a context for interpreting the participants' responses and allowed for the identification of trends across disciplines and demographic groups. The second section assessed linguistic proficiency and familiarity with academic writing conventions. Questions such as "How would you rate your proficiency in English on a scale from beginner to advanced?" and "What are the primary challenges you face when writing in English?" were included to gauge participants' self-perceived language skills and identify specific areas of difficulty. The third section focused on perceptions and experiences with EMI, including questions like "What are the benefits of writing your thesis in English?" and "What resources or support do you feel are lacking in your institution to help you write in English?" Open-ended questions were particularly valuable in capturing the participants' personal experiences, providing deeper insights into their struggles and strategies for overcoming linguistic and methodological barriers.

The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts from the Department of Literature and English Language at 8 May 1945 University of Guelma. These experts, with experience in EMI, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and academic writing, validated the questionnaire to ensure its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the target audience. Pilot testing was also conducted with a small group of non-EFL doctoral students to refine the questions, eliminate ambiguities, and confirm the reliability of the instrument. Feedback from these processes led to minor adjustments, such

as rephrasing technical terms and adding examples to clarify complex questions.

Data analysis involved both statistical and thematic approaches. Quantitative data from closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns and trends across participants' responses. For example, frequency distributions were used to examine the proportion of participants who reported specific linguistic challenges, such as difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, or structuring research papers.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses were subjected to thematic analysis, a systematic method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. Initial coding focused on recurring issues such as translation challenges, gaps in ESP training, and the lack of institutional support. These codes were then grouped into broader themes, such as "linguistic barriers," "methodological hurdles," and "systemic shortcomings," which provided a structured understanding of the participants' experiences.

Participants were recruited through a purposive sampling strategy, which proved necessary given the challenges in locating eligible respondents. The vast majority of non-EFL PhD students in Algeria write their dissertations in French rather than English, with English primarily reserved for thesis defense presentations. The sample (N = 40) therefore represents a specific and relatively rare subgroup: PhD students who chose to write their complete theses in English. Participants were recruited through academic networks, departmental contacts and snowball sampling. While the sample size is modest, it reflects the limited population available for this study. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The

analysis employed descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages for categorical variables, and measures of central tendency (mean, median) for scaled responses. Given the exploratory nature of this study and the constraints of the sample, the analysis focused on identifying patterns and trends in writing challenges rather than conducting inferential statistical tests. The findings should be understood as providing preliminary insights into the English academic writing challenges faced by this specific subgroup of non-EFL doctoral candidates, rather than as nationally representative results. Future research with larger samples would be valuable to confirm and extend these exploratory findings.

This rigorous methodology ensured the reliability and validity of the findings, offering an in-depth exploration of the complexities faced by non-EFL PhD candidates in drafting their theses in English. By combining quantitative trends with rich qualitative insights, the study provides a balanced and comprehensive perspective, contributing to the development of targeted strategies to support doctoral researchers in Algeria's evolving academic landscape.

3.1 Results:

The study engaged 40 PhD candidates, representing a diverse range of disciplines, including chemical physics, microbiology, economics, and civil engineering, among others. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 47 years, providing a representative sample of doctoral researchers navigating the shift to English in Algerian higher education. They belong to various fields of research as highlighted below:

Table 2. Candidates' Rates of Structural Hurdles

Structural difficulties	Ratio of occurrence
Organizing ideas	80%
Formulating research questions	88%
Stating a research problem	70%

Conducting literature review	100%
Analyzing data	94%
Synthesizing findings	90%

The findings reveal that while non-EFL PhD candidates recognize the strategic importance of English in academic research, they face significant challenges in adopting it as a medium for thesis writing. The findings indicate that most participants self-reported their English proficiency as intermediate, with only a small proportion achieving advanced levels. This proficiency gap significantly affects their ability to master academic vocabulary, adhere to international research standards, and produce grammatically accurate writing. Participants frequently cited difficulties with structuring their theses and navigating technical aspects such as translating complex concepts from French to English without compromising meaning or clarity. Commonly cited difficulties included mastering academic vocabulary, achieving grammatical accuracy, and structuring research papers according to international standards, given the novelty of the experience and the lack of sufficient training especially as the doctoral students were instructed in French, translation problems and plagiarism issues are other stumbling blocks.

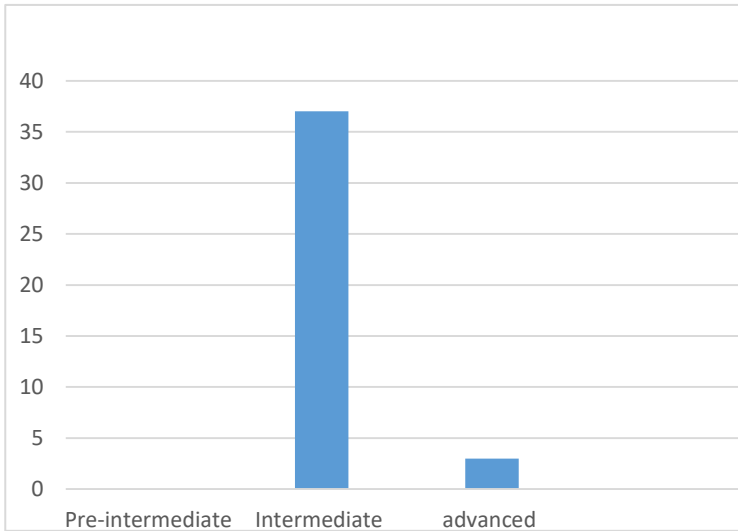
The research results show that Algeria's language policy shift in higher education is by no means a necessary step and a welcomed decision. Henceforth, the participants are aware of the subsequent changes that will reshape the Algerian linguistic landscape ensuring a more efficient implementation of EMI.

Participants also highlighted systemic issues, such as limited access to specialized English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training and insufficient institutional support. Many candidates expressed frustration with the quality and duration of ESP courses, emphasizing the need for more tailored and sustained instruction throughout their doctoral programs.

Proficiency Levels and Linguistic Challenges:

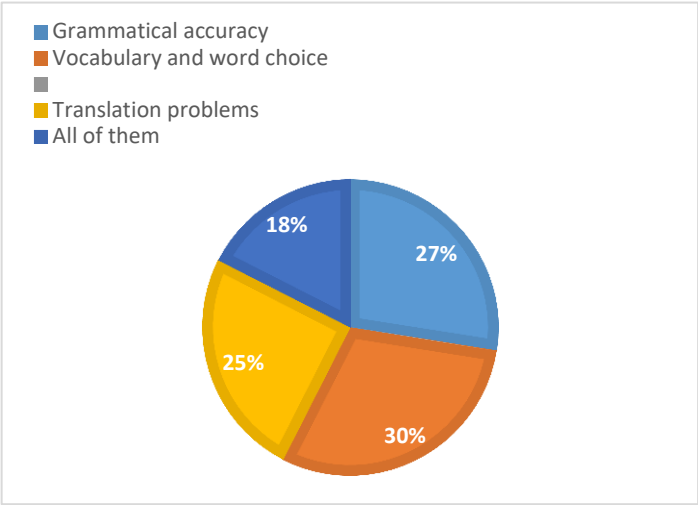
The majority of participants rated their English proficiency as intermediate, with only a minority achieving advanced levels (as presented in Figure1).

Figure 1. Participants' Proficiency Level.



As shown in Figure 2, candidates frequently highlighted difficulties in mastering field-specific academic vocabulary and adhering to conventions of grammar and syntax required in international academic discourse. Common difficulties included subject-verb agreement, appropriate use of articles, and complex sentence structures. Translation emerged as a recurring concern, particularly for candidates accustomed to drafting research in French.

Figure 2. Candidates' Linguistic Challenges



Structural and Methodological Hurdles:

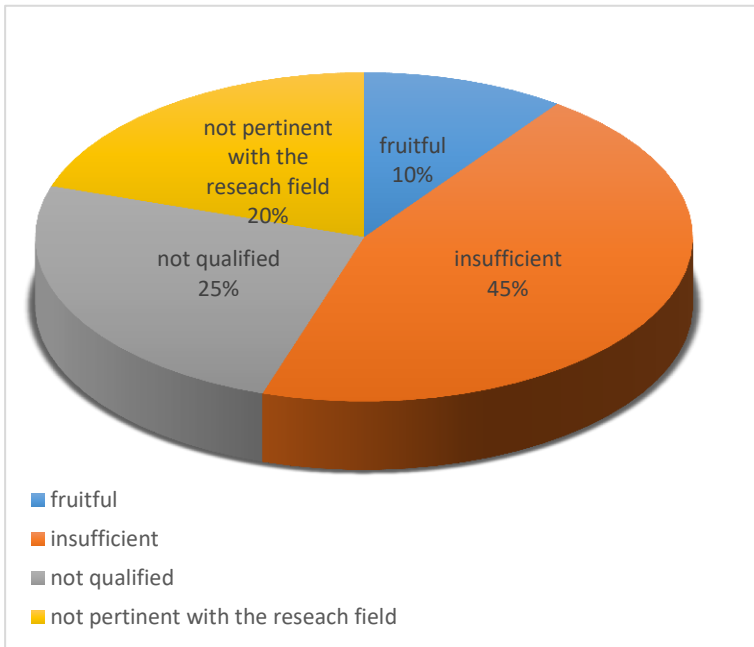
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As shown in Table 2 above, participants reported difficulties across multiple structural dimensions. All participants (100%) indicated challenges with conducting literature reviews. The majority also reported difficulties with analyzing data (94%), formulating research questions (88%), and synthesizing findings (90%). Additional challenges included organizing ideas cohesively (80%) and stating research problems clearly (70%).

Systemic Issues and Institutional Support:

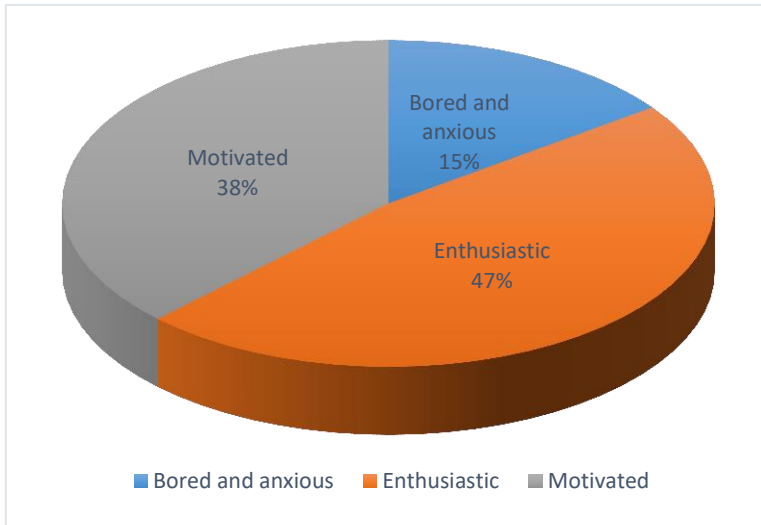
Figure 3. The Candidates' Perceptions about the Current ESP Courses.



As appears in Figure 3, participants noted the insufficient duration and quality of ESP courses, which often emphasized general English at the expense of academic and field-specific language skills. Institutional support, such as workshops, tailored writing resources, and supervisor guidance, was reported as inadequate. Participants expressed frustration with the inconsistency of feedback from supervisors.

Motivation and Enthusiasm for English:

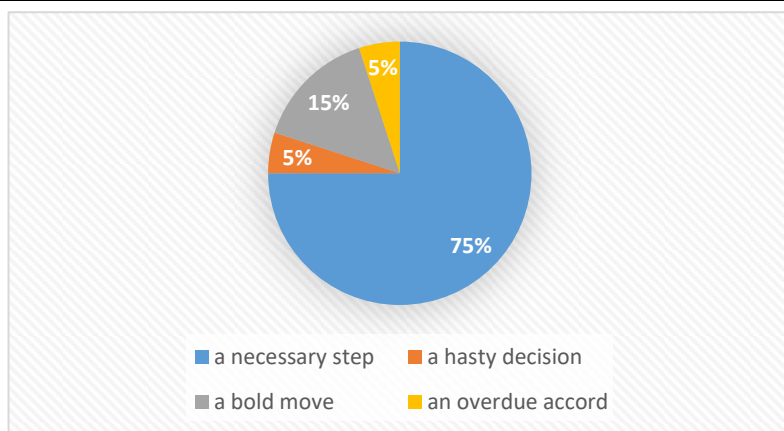
Figure 4. Participant's Emotional Readiness to Produce in English.



Despite these challenges, participants overwhelmingly recognized the strategic importance of English for advancing their academic careers. As shown in Figure 4 above, most expressed enthusiasm and motivation for adopting English, citing its potential to enhance global academic visibility, foster international collaborations, and access a wider array of scientific literature. This enthusiasm has driven many to adopt self-improvement strategies, such as engaging with English-language journals, consuming daily scientific topics and attending international conferences, and utilizing online learning platforms.

Implications for Algeria's Linguistic Landscape:

Figure 5. Respondents' Assessment of Algeria's language policy shift in higher education:



The findings underscore the broader sociolinguistic implications of Algeria's shift toward EMI. As the Figure 5 summarizes, participants acknowledged that this transition represents a critical step in modernizing the country's higher education system and aligning it with global academic standards. However, they also emphasized the need for a well-structured, long-term policy to support this transition, ensuring that it does not further marginalize the use of French or Arabic in academic and professional contexts.

3.2 Discussion:

Linguistic Challenges in the Algerian Context:

The findings reveal that while non-EFL PhD candidates recognize the strategic importance of English in academic research, they face significant challenges in adopting it as a medium for thesis writing. The self-reported intermediate proficiency levels among most participants significantly affect their ability to master academic vocabulary, adhere to international research standards, and produce grammatically accurate writing. This proficiency gap is particularly problematic given that these doctoral students were instructed primarily in French throughout their previous education, making English their third or fourth language of academic engagement.

The translation difficulties reported by participants highlight a deeper issue beyond simple linguistic transfer. Translating complex scientific concepts from French to English without compromising meaning or clarity represents a cognitive challenge compounded by the lack of systematic training in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This finding aligns with research on multilingual academic writing, where scholars working across languages face the challenge of maintaining conceptual precision while adapting to different rhetorical conventions. The prevalence of translation-related issues and concerns about plagiarism suggests that participants lack adequate guidance on how to navigate these challenges appropriately.

Structural and Methodological Competencies:

The structural and methodological hurdles identified in this study are particularly striking. The unanimous report (100%) of difficulties with conducting literature reviews indicates a fundamental gap in research training that extends beyond language proficiency. Similarly, the high rates of difficulty with data analysis (94%), formulating research questions (88%), and synthesizing findings (90%) suggest that participants lack familiarity with the conventions and expectations of international academic discourse.

These findings underscore that the challenge of writing dissertations in English is not merely linguistic but also methodological. Many participants lack understanding of research design principles, critical analysis conventions, and the synthesis of research findings into coherent academic narratives that conform to Anglo-American scholarly expectations. This is particularly significant given that Algerian doctoral education has traditionally followed French academic conventions, which differ substantially from Anglo-American models in terms of rhetorical structure, argumentative style, and expectations for literature engagement.

Institutional and Systemic Deficiencies:

The systemic shortcomings revealed in this study point to a critical gap between Algeria's policy aspirations for English-medium instruction and the institutional infrastructure needed to support its implementation. Participants' dissatisfaction with the quality and duration of ESP courses highlights a fundamental misalignment: current courses emphasize general English skills rather than the academic and field-specific competencies required for doctoral-level research writing.

The reported inadequacy of institutional support—including limited workshops, insufficient tailored writing resources, and inconsistent supervisor guidance—reveals that the burden of English language acquisition has been placed primarily on students themselves through self-directed learning. This situation is further complicated by the fact that many supervisors may themselves lack sufficient training in English academic writing conventions, limiting their ability to provide effective guidance.

The absence of a unified EMI strategy across Algerian universities contributes to significant disparities in instructional quality and resource availability. This inconsistency hampers the uniform development of linguistic and methodological competencies, creating an uneven landscape where doctoral students' preparedness for English-language publication varies considerably depending on their institutional context.

Motivation as a Facilitating Factor:

Despite the substantial challenges identified, participants' overwhelming enthusiasm for English represents a crucial facilitating factor. Their recognition of English as strategically important for advancing academic careers, enhancing global visibility, and fostering international collaborations indicates strong intrinsic motivation. This motivation has driven many to adopt self-improvement strategies, including engaging with English-language journals,

attending international conferences, and utilizing online learning platforms.

These finding suggests that the primary obstacle to successful EMI implementation in Algeria is not attitudinal resistance but rather the lack of adequate institutional support structures. Participants are willing and eager to develop their English academic writing competencies; what they require is systematic, sustained, and specialized instruction that addresses both linguistic and methodological dimensions of academic writing.

Implications for Algeria's Linguistic Landscape:

The findings underscore broader sociolinguistic implications of Algeria's shift toward EMI. Participants acknowledged that this transition represents a critical step in modernizing Algeria's higher education system and aligning it with global academic standards. However, they also emphasized the need for a well-structured, long-term policy to support this transition, ensuring that it does not further marginalize the use of French or Arabic in academic and professional contexts.

The research results indicate that Algeria's language policy shift in higher education, while challenging, is viewed as a necessary and welcomed decision. Participants demonstrate awareness of the subsequent changes that will reshape the Algerian linguistic landscape, suggesting optimism about more efficient EMI implementation in the future.

Comparative Insights:

Comparing these findings with similar contexts reveals parallels and opportunities for Algeria to learn from other multilingual countries. For instance, nations like Malaysia and Turkey have successfully implemented EMI through comprehensive policies that integrate ESP into their educational frameworks and prioritize faculty development. These models offer valuable lessons for Algeria's ongoing efforts to bridge linguistic and academic gaps.

Despite these challenges, the majority of respondents expressed enthusiasm for writing in English, citing its potential to enhance their global academic visibility and facilitate international collaboration. Accordingly, all the participants are working on enhancing their English language proficiency either by reading articles, books, reviews, and conference papers in their field of research or by consuming daily scientific topics online. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions, including enhanced ESP curricula, improved training for supervisors, and increased access to academic writing resources.

Need for Targeted Interventions:

The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions, including enhanced ESP curricula that prioritize academic and field-specific writing skills, improved training for supervisors in English academic writing pedagogy, and increased access to specialized academic writing resources. Without such interventions, the gap between policy aspirations and practical implementation will continue to leave doctoral students underprepared for the demands of publishing in English and participating fully in international academic discourse.

4. Further Recommendations:

The findings of this research indicate that non-EFL doctoral students are confronting serious difficulties while drafting their theses. From this point forward, the student's motivation should be fueled in order to captivate as many researchers producing in English as possible; it is highly recommended that:

First, ESP course designers and material developers must conduct thorough needs analyses to align course content with the specific linguistic and research demands of doctoral candidates. This includes prioritizing academic writing skills, such as mastering discipline-specific vocabulary, syntactic accuracy, and research methodology. Furthermore, institutions should extend the duration and depth of ESP

training to ensure sustained language development throughout the doctoral program. Tailored workshops, hands-on research exercises, and continuous professional development for ESP instructors will also foster a more robust academic environment. The ESP courses need to spotlight more academic writing with its particularities related to grammar, syntax, and technical vocabulary. The courses should surpass the consumption of General English and focus on research methodology. In addition, the time allocated for studying English as part of the doctoral theoretical year should be extended. The training must be ongoing throughout the whole cycle of the doctorate program. What is more, ESP teachers need to receive rigorous, comprehensive, intensive, and progressive training that enables them to equip the doctorate candidates with the necessary skillsets. Coupled with organizing hands-on workshops and enlarging the scope of scientific research by the PhD candidates, their teachers, and supervisors, the spirit of research will be instilled creating an adequate environment for production and further innovations. Finally, basic reforms have to be introduced at the level of the ESP courses non-EFL students are receiving from their first year. This will ensure a higher level of proficiency in English and a better academic preparation for their further studies.

5. Limitations and Future Research:

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 40 participants, while diverse in disciplinary representation, may not fully capture the experiences of all non-EFL PhD candidates in Algeria. Future studies could expand the sample size and include participants from a wider range of universities to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data from questionnaires introduces the possibility of response bias, which may affect the accuracy of the results. Complementary methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide richer qualitative insights.

Additionally, this research primarily focuses on the linguistic and methodological challenges faced by PhD candidates. Future research could explore the role of institutional policies, supervisor support, and technological tools in facilitating the adoption of English for academic purposes. Longitudinal studies tracking the progress of non-EFL PhD candidates over time would also be valuable in assessing the long-term impact of EMI on academic outcomes and professional trajectories.

Finally, the sociolinguistic implications of the shift to EMI in Algeria warrant further investigation. Studies examining how this transition affects the use of French and Arabic in academic and professional contexts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the broader linguistic landscape in Algeria.

Conclusion:

The shift toward English as a medium for PhD thesis drafting among non-EFL candidates in Algeria represents a pivotal step in modernizing the country's higher education system and aligning it with global academic standards. This transition holds the potential to enhance the international visibility of Algerian researchers, foster academic collaboration, and improve access to cutting-edge scientific knowledge. However, the findings of this study highlight significant challenges, including linguistic barriers, methodological gaps, and insufficient institutional support, which threaten to hinder the successful adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI).

The practical implications of this study underscore the urgent need for targeted reforms at multiple levels. Institutions must prioritize the design and implementation of tailored English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs that address the unique needs of non-EFL doctoral candidates. These programs should focus on advanced academic writing skills, research methodology, and field-specific language competencies. Additionally, the duration and depth of ESP

training must be expanded to ensure sustained language development throughout the doctoral journey. Faculty development programs are equally critical, equipping supervisors and instructors with the tools to support students' linguistic and methodological growth effectively.

On a policy level, the study advocates for the development of a cohesive EMI framework that aligns with Algeria's linguistic and cultural landscape. Policymakers must ensure that the shift to EMI does not come at the expense of Arabic and French, both of which hold significant cultural and historical importance. A balanced approach that integrates multilingualism into the academic ecosystem can ensure the preservation of national identity while embracing the opportunities offered by global academic integration. Future research should build upon the findings of this study by addressing its limitations. Expanding the sample size to include a broader representation of Algerian universities and disciplines will enhance the generalizability of the results. Additionally, complementary methodologies, such as in-depth interviews and longitudinal studies, can provide richer insights into the long-term impact of EMI on doctoral candidates' academic outcomes and professional trajectories. Investigating the role of institutional policies, supervisor training, and technological tools in supporting EMI adoption could further illuminate strategies for overcoming existing barriers.

Moreover, the sociolinguistic implications of the EMI transition warrant deeper exploration. Future studies could examine how the shift to English affects the roles of French and Arabic in academia and broader professional contexts. Understanding these dynamics will provide a more comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities of multilingualism in higher education.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on EMI in non-English-dominant contexts by offering actionable recommendations for policymakers,

educators, and researchers. By addressing the linguistic, methodological, and institutional challenges faced by non-EFL doctoral candidates, Algeria can ensure the sustainability and success of its EMI initiatives. The insights gained from this study not only inform strategies for Algeria but also offer valuable lessons for other multilingual nations navigating similar transitions in their higher education systems.

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