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The Shift to English-Medium Instruction: Tracking Instructors' Experiences at Setif 1 University

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Summary:
This study investigates the experiences of instructors at the Faculty of Sciences at Setif 1 University regarding the implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Algerian higher education, in a context where the practical realities of EMI adoption in multilingual university settings remain underexplored. It adopts a qualitative descriptive design, with data collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach (2006), to examine linguistic, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions of EMI implementation. The findings reveal that, although instructors consider EMI an important step toward improving scientific education and aligning with international academic standards, its implementation remains constrained by limited English proficiency, the additional time required to adapt course materials, and insufficient institutional support. Participants report frequent code-switching between Arabic and French, alongside reliance on digital translation tools to facilitate classroom communication. Despite these challenges, instructors demonstrate a positive disposition toward EMI and emphasize the need for gradual implementation, discipline-specific language training, and more inclusive institutional policies. The study concludes that the effectiveness of EMI in Algeria depends on sustained linguistic and pedagogical capacity-building efforts, framing it as a long-term developmental process rather than a simple policy shift.

Keywords: English-Medium Instruction; Algerian Higher Education; Instructor Perceptions; Pedagogical Practices; Language Policy

INTRODUCTION

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English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education has expanded significantly over the past two decades, largely driven by the growing dominance of English in academia and the broader process of higher education internationalization within an increasingly competitive global job market (Coleman, 2006; Jiang & Zhang, 2019; Macaro et al., 2018; Dearden, 2015). In this context, proficiency in English is no longer viewed solely as an academic asset but also as a key requirement for employability, mobility, and participation in global professional networks (Margić&VodopijaKristanović, 2018). EMI is commonly defined as "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" (Macaro, 2018, p. 19). The rise of EMI has been linked to multiple institutional and educational goals, including attracting international students and staff (Lei & Hu, 2014), strengthening institutional internationalization and competitiveness (Joe & Lee, 2013), promoting student mobility (Coyle, 2013), and enhancing English proficiency without undermining content learning (Macaro et al., 2018).

In Algeria, however, the linguistic landscape presents a more complex situation. Arabic remains the dominant mother tongue, while French continues to occupy a strong position in higher education, particularly in scientific and technical disciplines. Against this multilingual backdrop, Algeria is currently undergoing a major language policy shift with the gradual adoption of English as a medium of instruction across universities. This transition is intended to affect most academic disciplines and is particularly directed at incoming undergraduate cohorts who are expected to begin their studies in English from their first year. According to Benrabah (2013), the growing role of English reflects Algeria's response to the limitations of both French and Arabic in terms of global knowledge access and scientific communication.

The introduction of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) at the Faculty of Sciences, Setif 1 University in Algeria, presents notable challenges, particularly regarding the preparedness of the infrastructure and teachers. This situation arises in a context where French has long been the language of scientific disciplines; however, a gap remains in understanding how both educators and learners perceive and experience EMI, which could hinder its effective implementation. This study aims to examine how English as a medium of instruction is implemented in scientific classrooms and how closely current practices align with national strategies, the linguistic and pedagogical

preparedness of teachers for EMI in a multilingual Algerian context, and identify the key challenges and gaps between EMI policy and its actual application in higher education settings.

Building on this foundation, the present research investigates how EMI is currently being implemented at the Faculty of Sciences, Setif 1 University. It specifically explores the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by teachers in EMI classrooms during the second year of the national EMI rollout (2023-2025). As Algeria's educational institutions continue to globalize, understanding how EMI is experienced by its academic staff becomes crucial. By tracking instructors' experiences, the study positions EMI not simply as a policy shift but as a pedagogical transformation shaped by globalized, linguistic, and institutional dynamics. The present study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the insights of instructors in the Faculty of Sciences at Setif 1 University regarding the effectiveness and practicality of EMI implementation?
2. What linguistic, pedagogical, or institutional challenges do instructors face when lecturing in English?
3. What strategies do instructors believe are necessary to support successful EMI implementation in technical disciplines?

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the existing body of research on English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education, with particular attention to its implementation in multilingual and non-Anglophone contexts. It synthesizes key findings related to policy motivations, teacher and student experiences, and the linguistic and pedagogical challenges associated with EMI adoption in Algerian higher education institutions.

2.1 English in International Higher Education

Many universities in Europe and beyond have implemented English-language programs in response to the lingua franca status of English in scientific discourse, as well as other social, economic, and technological factors. The concept of "universal education", which seeks to provide all students equal access to educational opportunities regardless of their location, ethnicity, age, or cultural background, and International Universities, which are academic institutions established through international collaboration, have greatly facilitated the globalization of scientific and academic communication (Baker, 2021; Li, 2022).

This integration of English into higher education curricula underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive academic environment that promotes international collaboration and knowledge exchange. The expansion of English-taught programs in higher education reflects broader trends toward internationalization and the recognition that English proficiency has become essential for academic and professional success in an increasingly interconnected world.

2.2 EMI in Higher Education: General Overview

English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is the practice of teaching various academic disciplines, such as history, mathematics, and physics, using the English language to communicate specific disciplinary content. According to Macaro (2018), EMI is "the use of English to teach academic subjects, excluding English language studies, in settings where the majority of the population does not speak English as their first language" (p.19).

Dafouz and Smit (2020) claim that the emergence of EMI began in Europe in the 1990s, particularly in northern European countries, in response to the growing acceptance of English as a universal language. This trend reflected English's position as the standard language for scientific discourse and investigation. Since then, the use of EMI has expanded to non-English-speaking regions and other countries, such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands, representing a shift from teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to using EMI for academic courses (Dearden, 2015).

Notably, EMI implementation is a crucial component of the policies employed to enhance the internationalization of HE institutions and students, enabling them to compete in an increasingly globalized job market where English is recognized as the lingua franca (Molino et al., 2022). Furthermore, if strategically planned and implemented, EMI can contribute to promoting the quality of education, as it generally incorporates the use of updated teaching materials and international resources (Costa &Mariotti, 2023a). EMI can also contribute to attracting international partners, students, staff, and projects. It may also help HE institutions increase their graduates' employability, improve foreign language proficiency, and enhance their international status and visibility.

2.3 Rationale for EMI Implementation: Multifaceted Perspective

The implementation of EMI in higher education has gained momentum as a response to the increasing globalization of education and the worldwide dominance of the English language. The primary justification for adopting EMI centers is preparing students for the global job market, where English fluency is frequently a critical requirement. Students can improve their English language proficiency while acquiring subject knowledge through EMI, increasing their

employability in an increasingly competitive global workforce, as noted by Macaro (2018).

Additionally, institutions implementing EMI are perceived as more prestigious, which helps them attract top faculty and enhances their overall reputation (Wachter&Maidworm, 2014). English is associated with academic excellence and high-quality education. Furthermore, EMI can foster global cooperation and partnerships, promoting knowledge sharing among institutions across multiple countries (Galloway et al., 2019). EMI also reflects the evolving nature of higher education, where there is increasing demand for English-taught courses, especially in non-Anglophone countries. Research indicates that students frequently prefer EMI because it offers valuable qualifications that are internationally recognized (Chen, 2019).

This shift not only enables students to handle challenging academic material but also prepares them to interact effectively in a multilingual world. Furthermore, academic institutions can comply with global standards in research and knowledge dissemination by implementing EMI, as English continues to establish itself as the lingua franca in scientific communication (Hazelkorn, 2015). Therefore, the multifaceted rationale for EMI adoption encompasses multiple factors, including enhancing students' language proficiency, boosting institutional reputation, developing international collaborations, and aligning education with international research standards.

2.4 Challenges of EMI Implementation: Global Perspectives

Despite the numerous advantages related to EMI implementation, several difficulties have emerged, particularly in regions with inadequate English language foundations. For instance, the difficulties in implementing EMI vary greatly depending on the local and national contexts. Several scholars have emphasized that implementing EMI without a clear policy framework may result in significant challenges (Macaro, 2022; Rifiyanti&Dewi, 2023). A comprehensive literature review of EMI by Macaro et al. (2018), examining 83 studies from different global contexts, demonstrated that the primary concern among researchers was students' low English proficiency and the challenges faced by teachers in delivering content in English. As a consequence, programs may lack consistency in quality standards and support for students and staff, resulting in undesirable learning experiences and outcomes.

Notably, EMI implementation faces challenges related to linguistic competencies, as many instructors may lack the necessary training to teach effectively in a non-native language (O'Dowd, 2018). This limitation can negatively

affect their ability to convey complex subject matter and to engage students. For teachers, it was found that their effectiveness as instructors was compromised by poor language proficiency and an inability to prompt responses to questions. That is to say, the multilingual nature of the classroom also presented difficulties, as EMI teachers frequently struggled to locate appropriate vocabulary and were unable to use their mother tongues to ensure students' comprehension. For students, learning in English can be an additional obstacle, especially if their proficiency level does not meet the demands of an EMI program, potentially affecting their academic performances and overall learning experiences (Ou&Gu, 2024; Heron, 2024).

2.5 EMI Implementation in Algeria: Reality, Opportunities, and Challenges

In recent years, Algeria has been placing greater importance on English as part of its broader strategy to expand economic and cultural connections beyond French-speaking regions. This shift aligns with the country's post-2010 reforms, which focus on new principles aimed at greater global integration and technological advancement (Benrabah, 2013; Miliani, 2012; Khenioui&Boulkroun, 2023).

Algeria is currently undergoing a significant shift in its higher education language policy with the recent adoption of English as the primary medium of instruction (EMI) across most universities (Khenioui&Boulkroun, 2023; Hamzaoui, 2024). Beginning in the academic year 2023-2024, this transition applies to nearly all academic disciplines; this reform targets incoming undergraduate students, who are expected to begin their university studies in English from their first year. To support this major linguistic transition, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) introduced an online platform between July 20 and September 20, 2023. This platform offers English video lessons designed to help new baccalaureate holders improve their language proficiency and ideally reach the B2 level. Students can access the platform using their secondary school registration details.

It is worth noting that EMI is not entirely new to the Algerian context. Prior to the 2023 policy rollout, three institutions had already implemented English-medium programs: the oldest, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers in Boumerdes. More recently, the National School of Artificial Intelligence and the National School of Mathematics, both founded in 2021 in Algiers, began offering programs in English and French (U.S. Embassy Algiers, 2021). These early adopters have provided a limited but valuable window into Algeria's EMI potential.

Despite growing momentum, empirical research examining EMI implementation in Algeria remains scarce. Most existing literature focuses on language attitudes within higher education, with studies like Bouhmama and Dendane (2018) and Hamzaoui (2021) highlighting students' preferences for

replacing French with English in scientific instruction. While these studies have contributed valuable insights into language perceptions and policy support, they do not explore EMI classroom practices and outcomes. Similarly, Saidani and Afkir (2023) investigated students' attitudes at the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in Boumerdes, finding that while students generally reported improvement in English and content knowledge, challenges such as instructors' pronunciation and lack of fluency persisted. Importantly, this study focused on a single institution that had implemented EMI long before the nationwide reform, limiting its generalizability to the broader Algerian context post-2023.

The rapid implementation across Algerian higher education represents an ambitious policy experiment with a limited empirical foundation, demonstrating a political commitment to internationalization while raising concerns about the effectiveness of implementation without comprehensive preparation (Ghouali&Bouabdallah, 2024). Henceforth, the process of implementing EMI presents distinct challenges shaped by the country's complex sociolinguistic landscape and historical reliance on French in scientific disciplines. Despite growing national interest in transitioning to English, many Algerian university teachers lack the linguistic and pedagogical training necessary to teach specialized subjects in English, resulting in a reliance on code-switching to facilitate comprehension (Belmihoub, 2018; Hamzaoui, 2021; Ben-Yelles, 2024). Students, similarly, face difficulties engaging with content in English due to limited exposure to academic English, weak language foundations from earlier education, and the sudden shift from French-medium instruction (Hamzaoui, 2021; Bouhmama&Dendane, 2018). Moreover, institutions often lack the resources, structured policies, and support mechanisms such as ESP programs or EMI training workshops that are crucial for effective implementation (Ghouali&Bouabdallah, 2024). The challenges associated with EMI implementation highlight the complexity of language-in-education policies, necessitating comprehensive support systems that address both linguistic competence and pedagogical preparation.

To summarize, implementing EMI in Algeria presents intertwined linguistic, pedagogical, and institutional challenges. Lecturers often lack advanced English proficiency and specialized EMI training, which hinders effective content delivery. Meanwhile, students, particularly those in scientific and technical fields, struggle with understanding lectures and assessments in English due to limited prior exposure. The absence of standardized EMI policies, insufficient teaching resources, and a shortage of adapted materials also exacerbate these issues.

3. Research Methodology

The following section presents the procedures adopted during the data collection phase of the study. It provides a detailed description of the participants involved, the institutional and instructional context in which the research was conducted, and the instruments employed for data gathering. Additionally, it explains the steps followed throughout the implementation process and specifies the data analysis procedures through which the research questions were systematically addressed.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory design, aiming to provide rich, context-specific insights into the experiences of teachers working within Algerian universities. Moreover, this research employs a qualitative design to investigate the perceptions and experiences of higher education teachers regarding the implementation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Algerian universities. This approach is particularly well-suited for exploring individual experiences in naturalistic educational settings (Creswell &Poth, 2018), as it enables an in-depth examination of participants' beliefs and insights, which quantitative methods may not fully capture.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

This study involves Higher Education instructors from multiple departments within the Faculty of Science at Farhat Abbas University, Setif 1, Algeria. Participants were selected from multiple departments, including Computer Sciences, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics, to ensure diverse perspectives on the implementation of EMI. The participants were selected through a convenience sampling method, with teaching experience in EMI contexts as the primary criterion for selection. All participants were required to have a minimum of one to two years of experience in EMI teaching. This requirement ensured that participants had adequate exposure to the practical challenges and implications of EMI, enabling them to provide comprehensive and relevant insights. A total of 12 teachers participated in the study, comprising eight males and four females. Their teaching experience spans from 5 to 15 years. Each participant had a minimum of one year of experience in teaching courses conducted in English. The participants' ages ranged from 35 to 55 years. Regarding academic rank, two participants are professors, eight hold doctoral degrees, and two hold Magister degrees while currently pursuing PhDs.

3.3 Data Collection

The research data were gathered via semi-structured interviews to ensure that the main themes were flexibly covered. Semi-structured interviews were employed because they allowed for follow-up questions and discussions based on participants' responses, while also providing an opportunity to

investigate their insights and reflections thoroughly. The interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended questions, which addressed six interrelated themes. Every interview lasted approximately 40 minutes, allowing sufficient time for the interviewees to share their experiences and reflections. Depending on participants' preferences, interviews were conducted in Arabic, French, or English. Significantly, flexibility was crucial to ensure that rich, authentic, and detailed data were collected. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim; then, they were translated into English for analysis and reporting.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework (2006) to identify patterns and themes related to the research questions. The analysis comprised familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme identification, theme refinement, theme definition, and the production of the final report.

The analysis was primarily inductive (data-driven), with themes emerging directly from the dataset rather than being predefined. The process was conducted manually. It began with repeated reading of the interview transcripts to ensure familiarization with the data, followed by systematic initial coding done by hand. The codes were then organized into potential themes, which were subsequently reviewed, refined, and clearly defined to ensure coherence and distinctiveness. Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, providing a structured understanding of instructors' experiences with EMI implementation at the Faculty of Sciences, Setif 1 University.

4. Results

This section presents the study's findings from a thematic analysis of interview data. It outlines the main themes that emerged from instructors' accounts of EMI implementation at Setif 1 University, focusing on their linguistic practices, pedagogical adjustments, and institutional constraints. The results are organized to reflect participants' lived experiences and to address the study's research questions.

Theme 1: Instructors' Perceptions toward EMI Implementation in Higher Education

All interviewees expressed positive perceptions of the importance of implementing EMI in Algeria, particularly in the context of higher education teaching. Most of them acknowledged English as the global language of science and technology, emphasizing that the majority of programming languages and technical terms are in English. According to several participants, being proficient

in English enhances access to a massive collection of materials and scientific resources, which are crucial in different fields. One teacher highlighted that "English has become indispensable in the academic work and for student success, especially given the increasing demand for international collaboration and research publication" (T5). Another interviewee also mentioned that "the dominance of English in digital tools and platforms makes it a necessity and practical choice for instruction" (T10). However, one teacher conveyed a more hesitant view, revealing that "the transition is challenging due to habit and familiarity with the French language, which has long been used in Algerian education" (T3). This finding highlighted that the participants perceive English as important and relevant to cope with the globalized world.

Theme 2: Instructors' Experiences in the Use and Usefulness of English at the Tertiary Level

The majority of interviewees shared a range of personal and professional experiences that have shaped their insights toward the use and usefulness of English at the tertiary level; most of which contributed to their positive perceptions. One teacher explained that during their doctoral studies, "most of the scientific researches we relied on were written in English, which gradually improved our language skills and appreciation for its academic value" (T1). Another noted that "participating in international conferences where English was the primary language made us realise the importance of being able to communicate ideas clearly in a global setting" (T4). A third teacher shared that they had participated in a short training program abroad, where all instruction was in English, and this immersive experience helped them overcome their initial fear of using the language. Another participant shared that teaching programming and computer science, where nearly all resources, documentation, and code are in English, helped them integrate the language naturally into their teaching practice. Some also noted that the informal exposure to English through online platforms, such as educational videos and forums, expanded their vocabulary. These diverse experiences reflect how academic demands, workplace realities, and informal learning environments have all influenced teachers' growing acceptance of English as a valuable tool in their professional lives.

Theme 3: Instructors' Readiness for EMI Shift

All the interviewed teachers highlighted that the implementation of EMI has significantly influenced and reshaped their teaching practices. They explained that they had to "redesign their lesson plans, adapt instructional materials, and reformulate assessments in English" (T1). They found all these tasks both demanding and time-consuming. Furthermore, delivering lectures and explanations in English required "extra preparation, particularly to ensure the accurate use of scientific and technical terminology relevant to the discipline" (T9). For the majority, this transition felt like starting from scratch, as they were

not only linguistically unprepared but also pedagogically unprepared. On the other hand, the majority of teachers shared varying levels of confidence regarding their readiness to teach in English, though most described themselves as only partially prepared. A few teachers expressed moderate confidence, stating that while they could deliver content in English, they generally struggled with "spontaneous explanations or responding to unexpected student questions" (T7). One teacher noted, "I feel fine preparing slides and structured content, but real-time classroom interaction is stressful" (T11). Similarly, others mentioned that their reading and comprehension skills are at an average level; they struggled more with oral fluency, which made it challenging to explain complex ideas clearly and spontaneously during class.

Theme 4: EMI in Practice: Balancing Challenges with Coping Strategies

Teachers face significant barriers to the effective implementation of EMI across multiple dimensions. The absence of "needs-based training in EMI" (T2) and "clear policy or guidance from the university" (T6) creates a foundation of ambiguity. Moreover, language proficiency emerges as a central common obstacle, with teachers reporting "low confidence in speaking English" (T1, T7, T5) and consequently "switching between languages," which "confuses students" (T5). These challenges extend to pedagogical practice, where teachers struggle with "time-consuming lesson preparation" (T10) and "difficulties managing classroom discussions" (T6), indicating that EMI affects not just the language of instruction but transforms the entire teaching methodology. Notably, teachers expressed a serious concern about how EMI affects the learning process, particularly in terms of comprehension and assessment. Their observation that EMI can "create a communication gap" (T2) reflected concern about fundamental pedagogical effectiveness. Regarding the coping strategies, all interviewees agreed that while they deliver their lessons primarily in English, they frequently resort to code-switching, particularly into Arabic or French, when necessary to ensure clarity and comprehension. They explained that the medium of instruction remains English throughout the session, especially for presenting course content, technical terminology, and formal communication. However, "when it comes to elaborating on difficult concepts, responding to student confusion, or reinforcing understanding" (T11), they shift into Arabic alongside English to support students' learning. One teacher mentioned that "students often hesitate to ask questions in English, so using Arabic helps reduce anxiety and encourages participation" (T2). Furthermore, teachers highlighted the role of AI mobile applications as practical support tools for coping with the challenges of EMI. One teacher explained that "translation and dictionary apps are particularly useful in helping students quickly grasp technical terms during lectures" (T12). Another pointed out that "AI-

powered tools provide scaffolding that makes EMI courses more comprehensible for students with limited language proficiency. All in all, the teachers viewed both code-switching and AI mobile apps as complementary aids that may help to overcome the linguistic hurdle and ease the transition into the EMI classroom.

Theme 5: Insights on the Received Institutional Training

All participants shared similar views on the institutional training and support they have received, revealing that it did not adequately meet their actual instructional needs for delivering content in English. During the training sessions provided, participants noted that the focus was too general, with a primary emphasis on grammar, listening, and reading skills rather than on communication or subject-specific language relevant to their fields. They expressed frustration that the sessions grouped all scientific disciplines and included vocabulary that was unrelated to their specialty. Still, they reported that the English training course was designed for general language improvement, not for teaching technical subjects. To cut it short, the teachers felt that while some basic language support was offered, it lacked the practical focus and depth needed for teaching scientific content through EMI.

Theme 6: Instructors' Recommendations for EMI Effective Implementation

Instructors recommended precise requirements for successful EMI implementation, focused on professional development and curriculum involvement. The call for "intensive training for instructors" (T1), "regular support workshops" (T3), and training in "EMI specific pedagogy" (T4) demonstrates their recognition that effective EMI requires specialized skills beyond general English proficiency. The desire for "involvement in curriculum planning" (T2, T12, T4) indicates teachers sought intervention in EMI shift rather than being passive implementers, suggesting that a more collaborative approach could enhance EMI effectiveness. Additionally, teachers believed that EMI could be "promising if well supported" (T1, T6) and would be "expanded gradually" (T2). Notably, teachers provided strategic recommendations regarding disciplinary differences in EMI suitability, suggesting that EMI should be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of different disciplines rather than employing a one-size-fits-all approach**.** Additionally**,** for EMI success, teachers advocated "train teachers regularly" (T2) and ensuring "gradual implementation" (T3), emphasizing the need for sustained support rather than one-time interventions. In conclusion, these recommendations reflect the practical insights of instructors on creating sustainable educational change.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

This study highlights the complex reality of implementing English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Algeria, characterized by a tension between perceived necessity and practical challenges. It contextualizes these findings within current literature.

Firstly, the positive insight toward EMI among instructors at Setif 1 University reflects global reasons for its adoption, such as increasing international collaboration, gaining access to scientific resources, and enhancing graduate employability (Macaro, 2018; Galloway et al., 2019). This finding aligns with earlier Algerian studies reporting favorable views on replacing French with English in scientific teaching (Bouhmama&Dendane, 2018; Hamzaoui, 2021). Instructors' recognition of English as the leading language of science and technology confirms the Algerian government's strategic shift, a move highlighted by scholars like Benrabah (2013) and Khenioui and Boulkroun (2023) as a response to global communication needs and the limitations of French and Arabic in accessing worldwide knowledge. This demonstrates strong agreement from both top-down and bottom-up levels on the importance of EMI for Algeria's academic and professional future.

However, this optimistic view is strongly countered by the significant challenges seen in practice, echoing concerns in global EMI literature (Macaro et al., 2018; O'Dowd, 2018) and reaffirming warnings from Algerian researchers. Instructors' self-reported lack of fluency, especially in spontaneous spoken English, and their reliance on code-switching (to Arabic and French) directly reflect the linguistic unpreparedness predicted by Belmihoub (2018) a). This finding aligns with other Algerian studies, which have found that many university teachers lack the necessary training to teach specialized subjects in English (Hamzaoui, 2021; Benyelles, 2024). The stress of real-time interaction and the time-intensive process of adapting materials highlight that the policy change has placed a significant burden on faculty, changing not just the language of instruction but their entire teaching methods, for which they feel largely unprepared; an issue previously raised by Ghouali and Bouabdallah (2024).

These linguistic and pedagogical barriers are made worse by institutional challenges. Participants pointed out significant problems, including unclear policy guidance and generic English training that is not specific to any subject. This finding supports earlier research from Algeria, which warned about the lack of standardized policies for EMI and limited teaching resources (Ghouali&Bouabdallah, 2024). The training described, which focuses on general grammar and skills rather than subject-specific English or EMI teaching methods, is a prime example of the inadequate support that scholars have warned about. Without targeted institutional support, instructors are left to navigate this complex transition independently, which can result in inconsistent quality and student outcomes, as noted in both international (Macaro et al., 2018) and local research.

In response to these challenges, instructors showed initiative by developing practical coping strategies. The widespread use of code-switching is not just a sign of deficiency, but a strategic tool to ensure understanding in high-pressure environments; a practice that has been previously documented in Algerian EMI contexts (Belmihoub, 2018; Benyalles, 2024). Additionally, the innovative use of AI-powered translation apps reflects a modern adaptation to language barriers, providing real-time digital support for both instructors and students. Although these strategies work effectively as short-term solutions, they highlight the urgent need for formal, discipline-specific pedagogical training that instructors have explicitly requested.

Lastly, the instructors' suggestions for a gradual rollout, in-depth training, and input on curriculum planning are not just complaints, but thoughtful and practical ideas for lasting change. By seeking to take an active role in the EMI transition, rather than merely following policies, they highlight a crucial aspect often lacking in top-down education reforms. Their suggestions align with best practices from international research and address specific gaps identified by researchers such as Ghouali and Bouabdallah (2024) and Hamzaoui (2021) in the Algerian context.

Overall, this study reveals that while Algerian science instructors are committed to EMI as a crucial step for higher education, the current approach falls short on the necessary linguistic, pedagogical, and institutional support required for success. The experiences at Setif 1 University represent only a small part of the larger Algerian EMI initiative, highlighting that political will alone is insufficient, as Algerian researchers have cautioned. For EMI to achieve its full potential in Algeria, it needs to be viewed as a supported process of capacity building, rather than just a policy mandate. This should include incorporating instructor feedback into the development of comprehensive, context-specific training and policy frameworks that tackle the unique challenges of Algeria's multilingual educational landscape.

5.1. Limitations and Further Research Recommendations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is based on a relatively small sample of science instructors from the Faculty of Sciences at Setif 1 University, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other faculties or institutions within Algeria. Second, the study relies on self-reported data from semi-structured interviews, which may be influenced by participants' perceptions and subjective interpretations of EMI implementation. Third, the focus on instructors' perspectives excludes students' experiences, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of EMI practices in the classroom. Finally, the study captures EMI implementation at a specific point in time during the early stages of the national rollout, so ongoing developments and policy adjustments may not be fully reflected.

Despite these limitations, the study offers several important implications. It underscores the need for a more participatory and context-sensitive approach to EMI policy implementation that actively involves instructors in decision-making. It also highlights the importance of sustained professional development programs that integrate language proficiency and pedagogical training and are tailored to disciplinary needs. Institutional support mechanisms, including clear guidelines, resource provision, and workload considerations, are essential to effective implementation. Future research could broaden the scope by incorporating students' perspectives, using larger and more diverse samples, and employing longitudinal designs to capture the evolving nature of EMI in Algerian higher education.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Algeria, as revealed by instructors' experiences at Setif 1 University, presents both significant promise and notable challenges. The study shows that while teachers acknowledge the undeniable importance of English as the global language of science, technology, and communication, their day-to-day realities expose the gaps between policy aspirations and institutional readiness. Linguistic limitations, pedagogical constraints, and insufficient institutional support have created an environment in which practical difficulties overshadow enthusiasm.

At the same time, instructors' adaptive responses, including code-switching, digital translation tools, and proactive suggestions for gradual, discipline-focused training, reflect a strong professional commitment and a desire to participate meaningfully in shaping EMI's future. These findings suggest that Algerian universities should adopt a more participatory, context-sensitive approach that empowers instructors rather than imposing top-down reform.

Ultimately, the success of EMI in Algeria depends on reframing it as a long-term capacity-building process that integrates language development, pedagogical innovation, and institutional clarity. By aligning national policy goals with local needs and providing targeted teacher training, Algerian higher education can transform EMI from a linguistic challenge into a sustainable pathway for academic growth, global engagement, and access to knowledge.

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