

Exploring Teachers' Views on the Adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algerian Universities

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Abstract

The proliferation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) contributed to revolutionary pedagogical methodologies in higher education. Notably, English as a medium of instruction was recently integrated into Algerian higher educational system because of the global rise of English as a lingua franca in an academic context and to prepare students for international competitiveness. The current study explores the perspectives of science and technology teachers at Batna 2 University regarding the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction in higher education. In this regard, descriptive research is used to determine teachers' perspectives on EMI to implement educational strategies effectively. Thus, a questionnaire as a qualitative and quantitative data-gathering tool is administered to fifty teachers from the Department of Science and Technology at Batna 2 University. The results show that while most teachers recognize EMI's potential benefits for 21st-century students, they also expressed significant concerns about its implementation.

Keywords: *Algerian higher education, EMI, Teachers' Perspectives*

1. Introduction

The global spread of the English language nowadays significantly impacts higher educational system policies worldwide. English language, the jewel on the crown, has emerged as the lingua franca for worldwide communication, science, business, and scientific research. Non-English-speaking nations are witnessing an increasingly transformative shift to Anglicization in their universities to cope with the requirements of 21st globalized world.

Algeria is no exception. It found it necessary to embark on a journey of higher education reform to prepare its students for the 21st-century global workplace. A key aspect of this reform is integrating the English language as a medium of instruction into various disciplines and scientific research. The Algerian policymakers declared in 2019 the need for implementing the English language as a medium of instruction in all universities. This decision was introduced by Dr. Tayeb Bouzid, who was appointed minister of higher education and scientific research and the president of the Project “Enhancing the use of English in Algerian Universities”. He claimed in one of his interviews with an Algerian journalist that: “We have no choice but English Language in order to increase the visibility of research in higher education institutions”.

However, the transition to EMI attracts significant interests; it faces several challenges regarding its practical use, particularly in non-English-speaking contexts (Saidi, 2021, Ouarniki, 2023). Teachers play a fundamental role in this

process, and their experiences are essential for understanding the feasibility and effectiveness of EMI.

This paper investigates the attitudes of Algerian higher education instructors, particularly those in the science and technology department at Batna 2 University, regarding the implementation of EMI in their institution. Therefore, this study is grounded in the need to highlight the advantages and obstacles of integrating EMI and pave the way to new perceptions of its practical use.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English as a Medium of Instruction

A review of EMI definitions reveals that it has gained considerable interest from many worldwide researchers; each provided a distinct definition based on the context of interest. Shrestha (2022) defined English as a medium of instruction (EMI), which is the utilization of the English language to present academic topics in nations where they do not speak English as their mother tongue. Furthermore, Macaro et al. (2018) claimed that "EMI is a pedagogical approach of delivering non-English academic subjects through the use of English in educational settings where English is not the primary language, aiming to enhance both content knowledge and English proficiency."(p. 37)

Dearden (2015) states that EMI employs English to instruct academic courses in nations where the primary language is not English. EMI for non-English speakers is referred to as a bilingual instructional approach. In other words, English will be

integrated with the native languages of the students and teachers (Azarias, 2021). In education, employing multiple languages might enhance students' comprehension of various courses and resources (Jenkins, 2014).

Along with this line of thoughts, Dang et al. (2021), as cited in Prabjandee (2022), stated that English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is a growing global educational framework commended by policymakers to enhance the internationalization of higher education institutions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current investigation examines teachers' viewpoints on implementing EMI in Algerian higher education. Therefore, the nature of this situation falls within the descriptive research paradigm. As a data-gathering tool, the questionnaire is used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The latter is obtained from a random sampling of 50 teachers from the Department of Science and Technology at Batna-2 University.

3.2 Research Instrument

This study seeks to determine teachers' perceptions of EMI as a teaching and learning approach in higher education. According to Shahsavar and Tan (2012), questionnaires are reliable instruments for assessing attitudes and perspectives in a learning environment. Thus, the questionnaire is used as a data-gathering tool to quickly collect reliable and valid data.

Therefore, the questionnaire aims to assist participants in sharing their viewpoints and perceptions regarding the

investigated subject, which may have significant implications in the higher education.

The questionnaire consists of four main sections: (1) participants' background information that has crucial roles in determining respondents' perspectives, (2) teachers' viewpoints towards the advantages of EMI and its significant benefits in Algerian higher education, (3) participants' perspectives and attitudes towards the potential challenges that may arise during the integration of EMI in Algerian higher education, and (4) to explore some pedagogical recommendations to overcome the obstacles and challenges associated with implementing EMI in Algerian higher education.

3.3 Results and Discussion

3.3.1 The general information section: It involves the participants gender (Table 1) and years of teaching experience in the science and technology institution (Table 2).

Table 1. Participants’ Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
27-37	8	16%
38-48	21	42%
49-59	15	30%
60-70	6	12%

Table 2. Teachers’ Years of Teaching Experience

Years Range	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	4	8%
6-10	20	40%
11-15	19	38%
More than 15	7	14%

Regarding the age variable, Table 1 demonstrates that most teachers range from 38 to 70. This may reflect their teaching and learning background, which was based on the French language, in contrast to the new generation, who showed their readiness and ability to integrate EMI in their teaching process.

Additionally, concerning the teachers' years of experience in the science and technology department, Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents possess over 6 years of instructional experience at the university level. The majority obtained professional degrees in French, indicating their level of expertise in the educational process.

3.3.2 Perceived Benefits of EMI

The findings of this research revealed that all participants acknowledged the potential benefits of EMI, especially in terms of students' development and employability in the current era. Teachers stressed the vital importance of

equipping 21st-century students with the proficiency to use the English language in order to improve their competitiveness in the worldwide job marketplace, provide access to foreign resources, and facilitate participation in international conferences. They also expressed that EMI could foster international communication skills and enhance student engagement through diverse learning experiences.

3.3.3 Challenges and Drawbacks of EMI

This section's results indicate that although all teachers affirm the efficacy of EMI as a pedagogical technique, they identified some challenges and drawbacks encountered during its implementation in higher education. The findings of this section demonstrate that all participants affirm the efficacy of English Medium Instruction (EMI) as a pedagogical method, they highlighted some challenges and obstacles faced during its implementation in higher education. The thematic analysis of participants' replies identified four primary issues of EMI: language proficiency, teaching quality, curriculum modification, and insufficient high-quality training.

Teachers raised concerns regarding their English language proficiency level. They claimed that they lack the skills to deliver scientific concepts and terminology and explain them effectively in English, which would impact the teaching quality.

In addition, the participants emphasized the potential role of institutional support in overcoming the challenges of EMI implementation, such as providing access to relevant resources,

high-quality teaching materials, workshops, and opportunities for career advancement.

Furthermore, teachers addressed the necessity for high-quality training programs in English language skills to improve their proficiency level, pedagogy, and curriculum adaptation.

3.3.4 Pedagogical suggestions for Effective EMI Implementation

Our analysis of the results explored some pedagogical suggestions for effectively integrating EMI into higher education. Teachers emphasized the importance of developing robust training programs for teachers and students.

Diverse teaching methodologies, such as interactive learning activities, group work, and technology-assisted instruction, should be incorporated to create engaging and effective learning environments. Teachers suggested utilizing visual aids, real-life scenarios, and simulations to enhance student understanding of complex concepts and improve their language skills.

Additionally, teachers highlighted the need for high-quality training and workshops in English to support teaching strategies, prioritize EMI adoption, and provide necessary resources.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of EMI in Algerian higher education has proven patentable and successful in teaching and learning different disciplines. The current investigation aims to explore science and technology teachers' perspectives on implementing EMI in higher education. After analyzing the study's findings,

the researcher found that educators exhibited increased motivation and interest in incorporating EMI into their lectures.

Furthermore, the ongoing findings highlight that EMI integration in Algerian higher education institutions presents opportunities and challenges for teachers and students. Its implementation requires a multifaceted strategy encompassing teacher training, institutional support, and effective pedagogical strategies. In addition, addressing language proficiency and teaching quality concerns is crucial for successful EMI implementation.

A variety of suggestions and recommendations might be proposed to facilitate the effective implementation of EMI in Algerian higher education:

- Teachers must be well-trained to use English and deliver their lectures effectively.
- Higher education institutions should provide pedagogical facilities to assist educators in enhancing their language competence and instructional competencies.
- Policymakers need to make adjustments to the curricula to guarantee alignment with the concepts of English Medium Instruction (EMI).
- Policymakers should adopt course objectives and materials according to the needs of the EMI strategy

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