Research Article

# Breaking barriers: The shift to English as a medium of instruction in higher education-University of Tlemcen as a case study

Hynd Kaid Slimane [1]* 🆔, Meryem Selka [1] 🆔

[1] University of Tlemcen, Tlemcen, ALGERIA
*Corresponding Author: kshynd@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The integration of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in non-English-speaking countries has become a global strategy for enhancing students' language proficiency, international competitiveness, and access to scientific knowledge. In Algeria, EMI has recently been introduced in higher education institutions, but its implementation remains contested. This study investigates teachers' and learners' perceptions of EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen, focusing on opportunities, challenges, and strategies for effective adoption. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers and a questionnaire administered to 112 students. The findings reveal that EMI enhances English proficiency and provides access to international academic resources, but it is hindered by limited language skills, insufficient institutional support, and lack of teacher training. Participants highlighted the importance of gradual adoption, bilingual bridging, and structured support systems. This study contributes to the literature by situating the Algerian experience within broader EMI debates, providing insights for policymakers, educators, and administrators.

**Keywords:** EMI, higher education, Algeria, language policy, implementation challenges

Received: 14 Jul. 2025 ◆ Accepted: 08 Dec. 2025

## INTRODUCTION

The adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has gained increasing global prominence in higher education, particularly in non-English-speaking countries. EMI is viewed as a strategic response to globalization, enhancing students' competitiveness in international academic and professional contexts. Dearden (2015) defines EMI as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English."

While many universities worldwide have integrated EMI to align with internationalization goals, the process involves more than replacing the language of instruction. As Li (2019) highlights, EMI entails systemic changes that impact curricula, pedagogy, teacher development, and institutional policies.

In Algeria, EMI has emerged as part of broader educational reforms to increase international visibility and academic collaboration. The government has encouraged the gradual integration of English across different levels of education. However, this transition raises concerns: inadequate English proficiency among teachers and students, shortage of pedagogical resources, resistance from stakeholders, and lack of structured training.

In order to explore the perspectives of both teachers and learners on the implementation of EMI at the faculty of sciences (departments of physics and mathematics) at University of Tlemcen, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the realities of EMI adoption in Algerian higher education.

The research focuses on three key research questions (RQs):

**RQ1.** How do teachers and learners perceive the implementation of EMI in Algerian higher education?

**RQ2.** What are the main issues faced by teachers and learners in the implementation of EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen?

**RQ3.** What strategies can enhance the effectiveness of EMI implementation in Algerian higher education?

By exploring these RQs, the study aims to highlight both challenges and opportunities, contributing to ongoing debates on language policy and educational reform in Algeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Frameworks for EMI Research

Two theoretical perspectives frame this study:

1. **Content and language integrated learning:** It emphasizes simultaneous acquisition of subject knowledge and language skills.
2. **Internationalization of higher education:** It views EMI as a tool for aligning universities with global academic and labour market policies.

These frameworks provide lenses through which the Algerian experience can be examined, positioning EMI as both a pedagogical and policy-driven reform.

## EMI in Global Higher Education

Currently, EMI, which refers to the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the native language, has become a prominent trend in global higher education, driven by the forces of internationalization, globalization, and the demand for English proficiency in almost all fields. Its expansion is closely linked to the internationalization of universities, as institutions strive to attract international students and enhance their global rankings (Macaro et al., 2018). While EMI provides opportunities for students and faculty, it also raises concerns regarding linguistic equity, academic effectiveness, and the role of local languages in education. In addition, it offers benefits such as increased access to international knowledge, improved English proficiency, and greater employability (Bradford, 2016). Yet challenges include reduced subject clarity, inequality among students, and marginalization of local languages (Hu & McKay, 2018).

## Historical Background of Language Policies in Algeria

Algeria's linguistic landscape is characterized by a complex colonial and post-colonial history. During the French colonial era (1830-1962), French was the dominant language in education, administration, and public life. Following independence in 1962, Algeria initiated a process of Arabization to promote Arabic and reduce reliance on French (Benrabah, 2013). Despite the Arabization efforts, French kept a strong presence in higher education, especially in scientific and technical fields. Yet, over the years, the increasing significance of globalization and the rising importance of English as the dominant international language led to calls for incorporating English into the Algerian education system (Bouhadiba, 2020). As a result, recent shifts in educational policy reflect this growing emphasis on English, especially, in higher education institutions.

### The impact of EMI on higher education

As English is considered the dominant language in academia, EMI helps students to engage with the most recent research, scholarly articles, and developments in various fields. This facilitates their ability to stay informed and take part in academic discussions on a global scale. In addition to the personal benefits for students, EMI also fosters academic collaboration across borders, enabling scholars from different countries to work together, exchange ideas, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge on an international platform (Bradford, 2016). Another significant advantage of EMI is that it facilitates the dissemination of research in English. For example, by publishing in English, researchers from non-English-speaking countries can increase the visibility of their work, ensuring that their research reaches a broader audience and has a greater impact on global scholarly discourse. This helps in breaking down language barriers and promoting the sharing of valuable insights across national and linguistic boundaries,

contributing to a more inclusive and interconnected global academic community.

However, despite these advantages, EMI can also present some challenges, particularly for students who are not proficient in English. For many, particularly those from non-English-speaking countries, the use of English as the primary medium of instruction can create learning difficulties. These students may struggle to fully understand lectures, participate in discussions, or complete assignments effectively due to language barriers.

## Current Policies on EMI in Algeria

In order to promote English in higher education, Algeria has recently initiated policies to incorporate EMI across various educational levels. For example, in 2019, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced a policy encouraging the use of English in postgraduate studies and research (Boukezzoula, 2022). In addition, in 2022, the government introduced measures to expand English language instruction at the undergraduate level. In May 2023, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune mandated the introduction of English language instruction starting from the third year of primary school and directed the establishment of a university program to train English teachers for primary education, starting in the 2023-2024 academic year. At the tertiary level, the University of Tlemcen launched its first EMI training session on 13 January 2025, as part of the Erasmus+ project coordinated by the University of Limerick. This program aims at strengthening teaching skills in EMI, equip educators with innovative pedagogical tools, and promote internationalization within Algerian universities. These developments reflect Algeria's commitment to inculcating English into its education system to boost global competitiveness and academic excellence.

### Institutional strategies for EMI implementation

To make EMI more operational and effective, Algerian universities have adopted various strategies:

1. **Curriculum development:** Many universities have started revising curricula to integrate English as a language of instruction. So, in order to enhance the operational effectiveness of EMI, Algerian some universities have prioritized curriculum development by restructuring programs to align with international norms while integrating English as a primary medium of instruction. For instance, the University of Science and Technology Houari Boumediene has introduced EMI-based courses in engineering and computer science, ensuring that students cope with global academic discourse and industry-relevant content. Moreover, the University of Tlemcen has recently incorporated specialized EMI training sessions within its master's and doctoral programs, equipping students with the linguistic and academic skills necessary for international collaboration.

2. **Teacher training and capacity building:** Universities have implemented professional development programs in order to train faculty members in English proficiency and EMI pedagogical techniques. This includes partnerships with international organizations offering English for academic purposes training (Djebbari, 2021). For instance, the University of Algiers 1 has introduced EMI-focused workshops in collaboration with the British Council, providing faculty members with training in academic English, instructional

strategies, and classroom management in an EMI context. So, a continuous teacher training is essential in overcoming linguistic and pedagogical challenges, ensuring that instructors can confidently deliver their courses in English (Ouarniki, 2023). As a result, by investing in teacher training and capacity building, Algerian universities aim at creating a sustainable EMI environment that enhances both teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

3. **Technological integration:** Digital platforms, online resources and virtual learning environments, are increasingly used to facilitate the implementation of EMI. In this context, universities are also encouraging faculty and students to publish research in English to increase international engagement (Mami, 2020). For example, the University of Oran 2 has adopted Moodle and Google Classroom to provide EMI courses with interactive resources, enabling students to access lectures, assignments, and discussions in English. Consequently, by integrating technology into EMI courses, Algerian universities are fostering a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment that helps both students and educators in adapting to English-medium instruction.

4. **Student support and resources:** Recognizing that many students have limited exposure to English, universities are providing supplementary English language courses, writing centres such as CEIL and language labs to enhance learners' linguistic competence. For instance, the University of Algiers 2 has introduced language support centers, offering tutoring sessions, academic writing workshops, and conversation clubs to help students improve their English proficiency. Thus, by investing in student support and resources, Algerian universities are ensuring a smoother transition to EMI while fostering academic success in an English-dominant learning context.

## Teachers' and Learners' Perspectives on EMI

Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of EMI, and their attitudes toward this transition significantly affect its effectiveness. While many educators consider EMI as an academic advancement, they also show concerns regarding language proficiency, pedagogical adaptation, and resource availability. Similarly, students recognize EMI as an opportunity to enhance their career prospects but often struggle with comprehension and academic performance due to limited English proficiency.

### Teachers' perspectives

Concerning the positive attitudes, many teachers recognize the advantages of EMI, particularly in enhancing students' global academic opportunities. According to Macaro et al. (2018), university lecturers in various European and Asian contexts acknowledged that EMI facilitates access to international research and collaboration. Similarly, Dearden and Zhang (2017) found that Chinese university teachers viewed EMI as a means of improving students' English proficiency and preparing them for globalized job markets. Yet, despite recognizing the advantages, many teachers express concerns about the feasibility of EMI, mainly concerning their own language proficiency. In this context, Bradford (2016) noted that teachers worry about the potential loss of subject clarity when teaching in a second language. Moreover,

pedagogical issues, such as adapting teaching materials and assessment methods, also contribute to teachers' opposition to EMI.

### Learners' perspectives

Students' attitudes toward EMI are multifaceted, influenced by their language proficiency, academic background, and perceptions of its benefits and issues. Many learners consider EMI as an opportunity to improve their English skills and enhance their global competitiveness. According to Doiz et al. (2013), students in European EMI programs expressed enthusiasm for English-language instruction. Similarly, studies in Middle Eastern and North African countries indicate that students appreciate EMI for its potential to connect them with international scholarship and employment opportunities (Ali, 2020). Yet, while some learners embrace EMI, others find it challenging due to their limited English proficiency. Additionally, research by Aguilar and Muñoz (2014) in Spanish universities revealed that students often struggle to grasp complex subject matter when taught in English. As a result, the difficulties in understanding technical vocabulary and engaging in academic discussions can often lead to frustration and lower academic performance.

## METHODOLOGY

This section aims to clarify the methodology used in this study, providing a detailed explanation of the research approach adopted.

### Research Design

A mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire administered to students, while qualitative insights were obtained from semi-structured interviews with teachers. This triangulation increases validity by capturing both numerical trends and lived experiences, ultimately providing a deep analysis of the challenges, opportunities, and future directions of EMI in Algerian higher education.

### Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

### Sampling

The participants of the study included students from two departments: department of physics and department of mathematics, faculty of sciences at University of Tlemcen, Algeria. Data were collected from first- and second-year university students. The sample population included 112 participants, both male and female, aged between 18 and 23 years.

### Research Instruments

The researcher opted for two research instruments: a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was developed u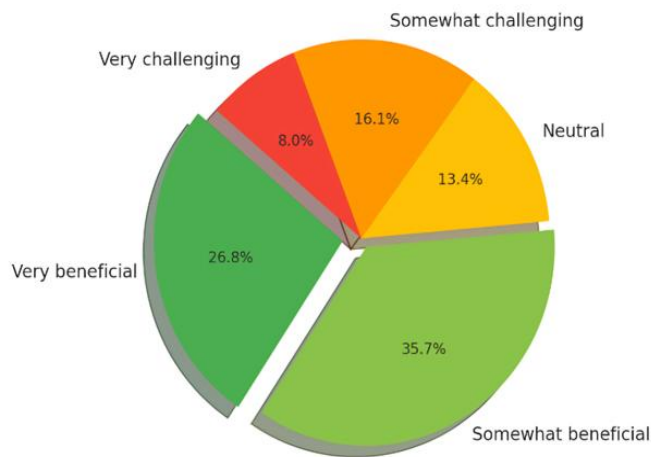sing Google Forms was piloted with 15 students for clarity and revised accordingly. Reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.82$), confirming internal consistency. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with 10 teachers, lasting 10-15 minutes each. An interview guide ensured consistency across sessions.

### Data Analysis

The researcher opted for two research instruments: a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire,

**Figure 1.** Students' perception of EMI at University of Tlemcen (Source: Authors' own elaboration)



**Figure 2.** Students' perception of EMI's impact on English proficiency (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

designed with specific questions, aimed to find out the perspectives of both teachers and learners regarding the adoption of EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen, offering initial insights into the research topic.

Using Google Forms, the questionnaire was administered to the students with the assistance of two of my colleagues who are teachers in those departments. To complement these findings and explore the participants' experiences and perspectives in greater depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted. These were conducted individually with 10 teachers from the aforementioned departments of the same faculty in a face-to-face setting, each lasting around 10 to 15 minutes. They were conducted at the university teachers' offices during their free time and were completed over a period of one month. This approach significantly enhanced the data obtained from the questionnaire, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

All in all, quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v.28, employing descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to examine relationships. Whereas qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. To ensure reliability, two independent coders analyzed transcripts, with inter-rater reliability (Cohen's κ = 0.87) indicating strong agreement.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Students' Questionnaire

*Section 1. General perception of EMI*

#### Q1. How do you perceive the use of EMI in your field of study?

The results in **Figure 1** show that 62.5% (n = 70) of students (very beneficial + somewhat beneficial) view EMI positively, indicating a general acceptance and recognition of its advantages. This suggests that most students acknowledge its potential benefits for academic growth, English proficiency, and access to international knowledge. 13.4% (n = 15) of informants are neutral, meaning that they neither see EMI as particularly helpful nor as a major obstacle. 24.1% (n = 27) of them (somewhat challenging + very challenging) find EMI difficult, likely due to language barriers, lack of preparatory support, or difficulties in understanding technical concepts in English.
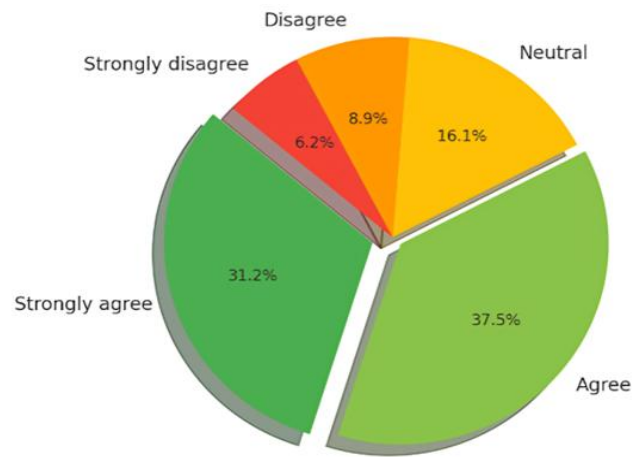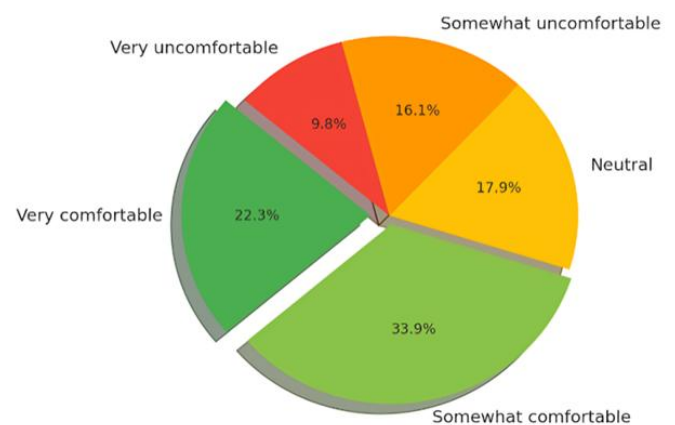


**Figure 3.** Students' comfort level in understanding EMI lectures (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

#### Q2. Do you believe EMI improves your English language proficiency?

According to the results in **Figure 2**, 68.8% (n = 77) of students (strongly agree + agree) believe that EMI enhances their English language proficiency, suggesting that a majority view EMI as a beneficial tool for language development. 16.1% of them (n = 18) remain neutral, which could show uncertainty about whether EMI directly contributes to their English improvement or if they have not experienced significant progress yet. Yet, 15.1% (n = 17) (disagree + strongly disagree) do not see EMI as an effective method for improving their English. This may be due to inadequate language support, limited teacher proficiency, or difficulties adapting to English in technical subjects.

*Section 2. Learning experience and challenges*

#### Q3. To what extent do you feel comfortable understanding lectures delivered in English?

As represented in **Figure 3**, 56.2% (n = 63) of students (very comfortable + somewhat comfortable) feel at ease with EMI lectures, indicating that a slight majority can follow English-medium instruction without significant difficulty. A portion of 17.9 % (n = 20) are neutral, meaning they may not find EMI particularly challenging but also do not feel fully confident in their comprehension. Additionally, 25.9% (n = 29) (somewhat uncomfortable + very uncomfortable) struggle to
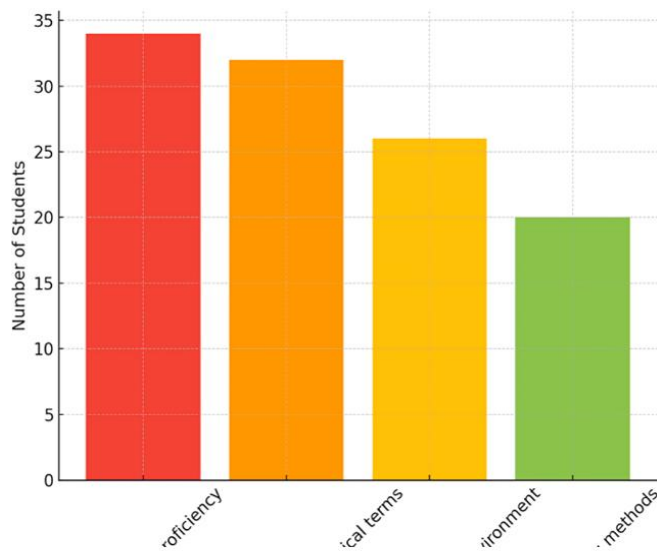
**Figure 4.** The challenges faced by the students in EMI (Source: Authors' own elaboration)
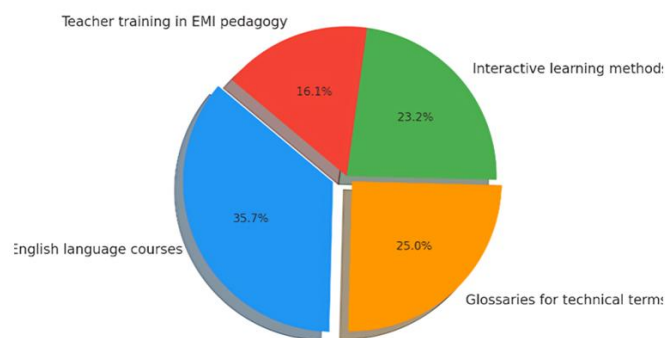


**Figure 6.** Students' experience with EMI (Source: Authors' own elaboration)



**Figure 5.** The preferred support for adapting EMI (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

28) of students favour glossaries for technical terms, indicating that subject-specific language difficulties pose a challenge in understanding EMI content. Moreover, 23.2% (n = 26) support interactive learning methods, suggesting that students prefer engaging and participatory learning experiences rather than traditional lecture-based approaches. Ultimately, 16.1% (n = 18) believe teacher training in EMI pedagogy is essential, meaning that improving instructors' ability to teach effectively in English is also a key factor in the success of EMI.

**Q6. How would you rate the preparedness of your teachers to deliver courses in English?**

From the outcomes in **Figure 6**, we notice that 51.7% (n = 58) of students (very positive + somewhat positive) have an overall positive experience with EMI, indicating that despite challenges, EMI is perceived as beneficial for learning. 21.4% (n = 24) remain neutral, suggesting that they neither find EMI particularly advantageous nor problematic. Additionally, 26.8% (n = 30) (somewhat negative + very negative) have a negative experience, implying that EMI still poses difficulties for a significant portion of students.

**Q7. Would you support a gradual transition to EMI with bilingual instruction (French/Arabic and English) before full English adoption?**

The results in **Figure 7** reveal that 71.4% (n = 80) of students (strongly agree + agree) believe that EMI will enhance their future academic and professional prospects, indicating a strong positive perception of EMI's long-term benefits. 14.3% (n = 16) remain neutral, suggesting that they are unsure about the direct impact of EMI on their careers. It is worth noting that 14.3% of them (n = 16) (disagree + strongly disagree) doubt the advantages of EMI, indicating concerns that should be further explored, such as job market requirements and language barriers.

**Q8. What additional measures do you think would help improve EMI implementation?**

The statistics in **Figure 8** indicate that 30.4% (n = 34) of students cite limited English proficiency as their main challenge, highlighting the need for additional language support programs. 25% (n = 28) struggle with technical terminology, indicating a potential need for glossaries or bilingual resources. 23.2% (n = 26) of the respondents feel that they lack instructional support, emphasizing the importance of teacher training

understand lectures in English, highlighting a significant language barrier that could hinder their academic performance.

**Q4. What is the biggest challenge you face with EMI?**

The outcomes in **Figure 4** reveal that 59% (n = 66) of students (limited English proficiency + difficulty understanding technical terms) indicate that language-related barriers are the biggest challenge in EMI. This suggests a strong need for English language support programs, glossaries for technical terms, and targeted linguistic training for students. Moreover, 23.2% (n = 26) struggle with the lack of an English-speaking environment, highlighting the need for more opportunities to practice English in university settings, such as discussion groups or language immersion activities. Ultimately, 17.8% (n = 20) cite ineffective teaching methods as a challenge, suggesting that teachers might require more training in EMI pedagogy to deliver content effectively.

*Section 3. Institutional support and recommendations*

**Q5. Do you think the university provides adequate language support programs (e.g., English courses, tutoring, and language labs) for students in EMI programs?**

From the results in **Figure 5**, we assert that 35.7% (n = 40) of students believe that English language courses would help them adapt better to EMI, reinforcing the idea that language proficiency is a major barrier and should be addressed through structured courses. 25% (n =
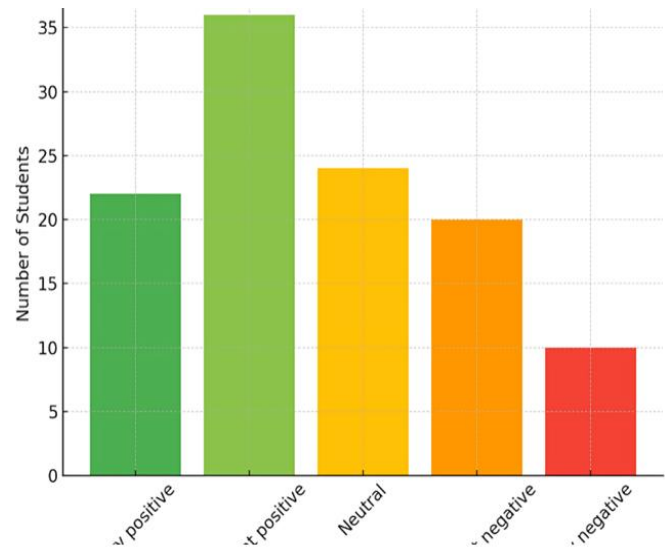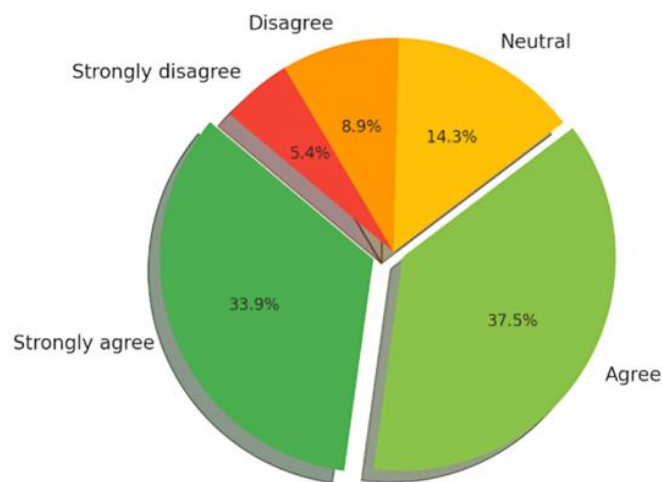
**Figure 7.** Students' perception of EMI's role in future opportunities (Source: Authors' own elaboration)
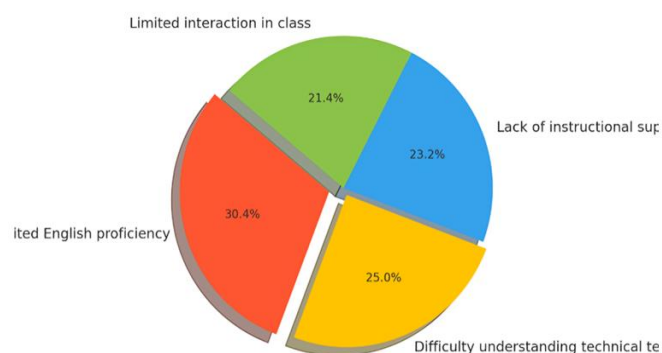


**Figure 8.** The main challenges faced by students in EMI courses (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

and resource development. Yet, 21.4% (n = 24) report limited interaction in class, which suggests a need for more student-centred and interactive teaching methods.

## Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of students' responses to the eight closed-ended questions reveals both positive perceptions and significant challenges regarding the implementation of EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen. The majority of students support EMI, acknowledging its role in enhancing their English proficiency and academic development. According to them, being taught in English improves their vocabulary, comprehension, and communication skills. but some of them still struggle with technical terminology and complex course content especially in scientific fields. In other words, while many students feel comfortable with EMI-based assessments, others find it challenging, especially in exams, emphasizing the need for additional academic writing support.

Additionally, preferences regarding the language of instruction vary, some students favoring full EMI while others preferring a bilingual approach that includes French. As a result, most students recognize the advantages of EMI in accessing international academic resources and improving career prospects, though some remain uncertain due to concerns about their own proficiency and the job market's demands. It is worth mentioning that the main challenges they face include limited English proficiency, difficulties with technical

terms, lack of instructional support, and limited classroom interaction. So, in order to address these issues, institutions should consider implementing language support programs, developing specialized instructional materials, enhancing teacher training, and fostering more interactive learning environments. To sum up, we assert that EMI presents valuable opportunities for students but its success depends on a gradual and well-structured approach that ensures accessibility and effectiveness for all learners.

To sum up, most students (62.5%) perceived EMI as beneficial. While 68.8% believed it improved their English, 25.9% struggled with lecture comprehension. The biggest challenges were limited English proficiency (59%) and difficulty understanding technical terms (25%). Chi-square tests revealed significant associations between English proficiency level and students' comfort with EMI lectures ($p < 0.05$).

## Teachers' Interviews Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the results obtained from the interviews sessions are presented and analysed.

**RQ1.** What are your thoughts on the implementation of EMI at the faculty of sciences? (Do you believe EMI enhances students' learning and academic performance? Why or why not?)

**RQ2.** What challenges do you face as a teacher when delivering courses in English? (How do you address these challenges in your teaching methods?)

**RQ3.** In your opinion, what strategies or institutional support would help improve the effectiveness of EMI in science education? (What role should teacher training programs play in facilitating EMI adoption?)

The analysis of teachers' responses highlights both the advantages and challenges of implementing EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen. While most teachers (8/10) recognize EMI's potential to enhance students' English proficiency and provide access to international academic resources, they show some concerns about its practical implementation. According to them, the key challenge is the students' limited English proficiency, which affects comprehension and participation.

Additionally, some of them (6/10) assert that they feel unprepared to teach complex scientific concepts in English due to a lack of formal EMI teachers' training. Other difficulties include insufficient teaching materials, reduced students' engagement, and a lack of institutional support. Thus, to improve EMI's effectiveness, most teachers emphasize the need for a gradual transition, where bilingual instruction (using mostly French) can help bridge the gap. They also advocate for specialized training programs for teachers, preparatory English courses for students, and the development of accessible educational resources in English. Institutional support, including professional development initiatives and incentives for EMI instructors, is considered crucial for successful implementation.

Finally, most teachers acknowledge EMI's long-term benefits but point out that strategic planning and targeted support measures are necessary to overcome the current challenges and ensure their sustainability in higher education.

All in all, eight out of ten teachers acknowledged EMI's potential benefits but expressed concern about students' weak English and their own limited EMI training. Representative quotes include:

Students understand the basic concepts, but when it comes to technical vocabulary, they get lost (physics teacher, interview 4).

I feel unprepared to explain complex ideas in English without losing accuracy (mathematics teacher, interview 7).

Thus, teachers emphasized the need for bilingual transition strategies and more institutional support.

## DISCUSSION

The findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of EMI at the faculty of sciences, University of Tlemcen. The students' questionnaire results reveal a generally positive attitude toward EMI, with many recognizing its role in enhancing English proficiency and providing access to global academic resources. However, some obstacles such as limited English skills, difficulties with technical terms, and discomfort with EMI-based assessments hinder effective learning. An important number of the respondents acknowledged their limited proficiency in English and expressed a preference for pursuing their studies in French because of the availability of qualified instructors and abundant resources such as books and articles in that language. Similarly, teachers' interviews highlight students' struggles with comprehension and engagement, alongside challenges faced by educators, including insufficient training, lack of appropriate teaching materials, and reduced classroom interaction. So, both students and teachers agree that while EMI has the potential to improve academic and professional opportunities, its success depends on a structured and gradual transition. In addition, most teachers emphasize the need for bilingual instructional strategies, specialized training, and institutional support to facilitate effective EMI delivery. Students, on the other hand, express a need for language support programs and adapted learning resources to ease the transition. As a conclusion, the data analysis underscores that while EMI presents valuable opportunities for higher education, its current challenges require targeted solutions, including professional development for teachers, enhanced student support systems, and strategic policy adjustments, to ensure sustainable and effective implementation. Thus, findings confirm that EMI is positively perceived but hindered by structural challenges. This aligns with studies in Morocco and Tunisia, where students show enthusiasm but face comprehension issues. Teachers' concerns about training mirror results from Gulf universities. For Algeria, the results highlight a pressing need for teacher training, student language support, and policy alignment. And consequently, EMI cannot succeed as a top-down policy; it requires gradual, well-supported implementation.

### Recommendations and Future Directions

In order to ensure the effective implementation of EMI in Algerian higher education, a gradual and structured approach should be adopted, allowing both students and teachers to adjust over time. First, bilingual instruction (French and English) can be used for clarification before transitioning fully to English. Second, to support students, preparatory English courses, glossaries of scientific terms, and academic writing workshops should be introduced to enhance their comprehension and confidence. At the same time, professional development programs for teachers are essential, focusing on EMI-specific training, peer

mentoring, and continuous pedagogical development. Additionally, the availability of high-quality instructional resources, including EMI textbooks and localized teaching materials, is crucial for facilitating effective learning. Third, interactive teaching methods should be encouraged to improve student engagement and foster a supportive learning environment. Moreover, universities must also provide clear policies, incentives, and regular evaluations to refine EMI strategies and address emerging challenges. Forth, collaboration with international institutions through partnerships, study abroad programs, and online exchanges can offer valuable exposure to global EMI practices. In this vein, Hu and McKay (2018) say, 'teachers need to be equipped with the necessary pedagogical skills and language proficiency to effectively implement EMI and ensure student success' (p. 238). Overall, by implementing these recommendations, EMI can be integrated more effectively, maximizing its benefits while minimizing learning issues for both students and teachers.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude and in light of the findings, it has been demonstrated that the implementation of EMI in Algerian higher education (University of Tlemcen) offers both significant opportunities and considerable challenges. On the one hand, students acknowledge the benefits of EMI in enhancing their English proficiency and broadening their access to global academic resources. On the other one, many struggle with language-related difficulties, particularly in mastering technical terminology and adapting to EMI-based assessments. Similarly, teachers highlight students' comprehension and engagement issues while also facing issues such as inadequate training, insufficient teaching materials, and reduced classroom interaction. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, both students and teachers recognize EMI's potential to improve academic and professional careers. Thus, its successful implementation needs a structured and well-supported transition. For these reasons, teachers focus on the importance of bilingual instructional strategies, specialized training, and institutional support, whereas students express the need for language assistance programs and adapted learning resources to facilitate the transition. All in all, these findings underscore the necessity of targeted measures to overcome existing barriers such as professional development for teachers, enhanced student support mechanisms, and well-defined institutional policies have to be prioritized. By addressing these issues through comprehensive strategies, EMI can be implemented more effectively, ensuring long-term sustainability and academic success.

### Limitations

The study was limited to one faculty in one university, and findings cannot be generalized to all Algerian institutions. Future studies should adopt larger, multi-site samples.

### Contribution

This research fills a gap in EMI studies by providing context-specific insights from Algeria, with implications for similar non-English-speaking contexts.

**Ethical statement:** The authors stated that the study was conducted in accordance with established ethical research standards. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary.

**AI statement:** The authors stated that AI tools were used solely for language editing and stylistic refinement.

**Declaration of interest:** No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

**Data availability:** Data supporting the findings and conclusions are available upon request from the corresponding author.

# REFERENCES

Aguilar, M., & Muñoz, C. (2014). The effect of proficiency on CLIL students' use of general and academic vocabulary. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 24*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12006

Ali, H. (2020). English as a medium of instruction in MENA higher education: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Language and Education, 6*(2), 45-59.

Benrabah, M. (2013). *Language conflict in Algeria: From colonialism to post-independence.* Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.27080059

Bouhadiba, F. (2020). English in Algeria: Current challenges and future prospects. *Journal of Language Policy Studies, 12*(3), 45-62.

Boukezzoula, N. (2022). The status of English in Algerian higher education: Policy implications and pedagogical challenges. *Educational Review, 34*(2), 78-94.

Bradford, A. (2016). Toward a typology of implementation challenges facing English-medium instruction in higher education: Evidence from Japan. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 20*(4), 339-356. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315316647165

Dearden, J. (2015). *English as a medium of instruction: A growing global phenomenon.* British Council.

Dearden, J., & Zhang, W. (2017). EMI in Chinese higher education: The key role of teacher training. *ELT Journal, 71*(2), 197-207.

Djebbari, Z. (2021). Teacher preparedness for EMI: An Algerian perspective. *Language and Education Journal, 29*(4), 112-128.

Doiz, A., Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2013). *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges.* Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.27195478

Hu, G., & McKay, S. L. (2018). English as a medium of instruction in Asian higher education: An international phenomenon. *Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 21*(3), 235-249.

Li, D. C. S. (2019). English as a medium of instruction: Voices from Hong Kong. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 32*(1), 1-16.

Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching, 51*(1), 36-76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350

Mami, N. (2020). Promoting English for academic purposes in Algerian universities: Challenges and strategies. *Higher Education Research, 18*(1), 34-50.

Ouarniki, O. (2023). Exploring teachers' perspectives on the implementation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Algerian higher education institutions: Challenges and opportunities. *Afak for Sciences, 8*(3), 176-192. https://doi.org/10.37167/1677-008-003-012

❖❖❖