

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TRAINING IN ENGLISH TEACHING TECHNIQUES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DJELFA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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**Abstract:** The recent decision to introduce English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in the scientific and technical streams of Algerian universities marks a major turning point in the country's language policy. Our research focuses on the experience of teachers from scientific and technical disciplines at Djelfa's Ziane Achour University. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study is based on data collected via a questionnaire administered to a targeted sample of 12 teachers from this university who actually attended the ministerial training course. The aim is to highlight the potential benefits, practical usefulness and general interest of this training program from the point of view of the teachers trained.

The results highlight a paradox. On the one hand, teachers are generally in favor of EMI, and are aware of its potential benefits for the visibility of research, the attractiveness of the university, and the employability of students. On the other hand, they express a crying need for further training, not only to consolidate their language skills, but above all to acquire pedagogical tools adapted to teaching in English. The heterogeneity of students' English levels, the lack of resources and time, and sometimes a form of resistance, are all challenges that complicate the transition. This is not to call into question the validity of the language policy, but to emphasize the importance of appropriate support.

The success of the transition to EMI at the University of Djelfa, and more widely in Algeria, depends not only on a political decision, but also on teachers' real needs being taken into account. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that high-quality in-service training, focused on the didactics of EMI, the sharing of best practices, and the provision of appropriate resources are basic conditions if this ambitious transition is to produce the expected positive effects. Similarly, investment in human capital is needed to transform this language policy into a successful pedagogical reality.

**Keywords:** Algerian university context, English as medium of instruction, lecturers' attitudes, teacher training.

## Introduction

Algeria, a multilingual country where Arabic, French, and Tamazight coexist, has embarked on a major reform of its education system, marked by the desire to introduce English as the language of instruction in higher education. This decision, announced in 2019 and set to be implemented progressively from 2023 onwards, comes against a backdrop of increasing globalization and the quest for greater international visibility for Algerian universities. It also responds to social demand, as English is seen as an asset for employability and access to knowledge.

The present study focuses on the initial phase of this linguistic transition, specifically examining the situation at the University of Djelfa. It focuses on the introduction of English as the language of instruction in scientific and technical courses, and more specifically on the perceptions and experiences of teachers impacted by this reform.

It should be stressed that the adoption of English as the language of instruction raises crucial questions, particularly in terms of preparing teachers and students. Understanding the perceptions, needs, and difficulties of those involved in the field is essential to adjusting policies, optimizing training, and, ultimately, guaranteeing the success of this ambitious linguistic transition. The case study of the University of Djelfa offers a localized perspective, but is potentially representative of national issues.

Research into EMI is abundant, but often focused on European or Asian contexts (Güller, 2024; Polli, 2024). Studies have stressed the importance of teacher training, both linguistic and pedagogical (Costa, 2024), as well as the need to adopt a multilingual approach, valuing “translanguaging” (Güller, 2024). Few studies (Harroug, 2025) have focused specifically on the Algerian context, hence the relevance of the present study.

The aim of our research is to evaluate the impact of this training, which took place in general English, and to identify the perceived benefits and difficulties encountered. In this way, we aim to contribute to the successful implementation of the EMI policy, taking into account the realities on the ground and the specific needs of teachers.

The central question is whether or not teachers at the University of Djelfa feel sufficiently prepared, both linguistically and pedagogically, to teach their subjects in English. Clearly, the issue can be reformulated as follows: What is the perception of teachers at the University of Djelfa regarding the usefulness of the ministerial training in English teaching techniques?

## 1. Literature Review

The introduction of EMI in higher education is a global phenomenon that raises many questions, particularly in multilingual contexts such as Algeria. A number of recent studies (Salhi & Kabache, 2024; Boudjelal, 2022) have shed essential light on the motivations, challenges, and strategies involved in this transition.

In the Algerian context, Khenioui and Boulkroun (2023) look specifically at the integration of EMI following the recent policy of Anglicization. In their study, they point out that the success of this approach depends largely on the ability to overcome major challenges. In this context, the authors highlight the inadequate language skills and potential resistance of teachers, calling for targeted support strategies and greater collaboration.

From a similar perspective, and also addressing the Algerian context, Amara (2025) analyzes the prerequisites for the use of EMI. His analysis reveals that teachers' lack of language skills is a major obstacle. With this in mind, the study highlights the need for a

clear institutional policy. This must be followed by appropriate teacher training and interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure the success of the approach.

On another level, the study by Galloway et al. (2024) sheds important light on the need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in contexts where EMI is growing rapidly, such as China and Japan. The researchers highlight a frequent lack of language support (ESP/ESAP) adapted to specific disciplines. It's worth noting here the gap between general English language training and the actual requirements of EMI, which argues for better integration of specific language skills into the content.

Examining EMI practices mainly in Italy, Rosi et al. (2024) highlight the vital importance of pedagogical and not just linguistic training for teachers involved in EMI. Their research highlights the need to develop innovative didactic approaches and appropriate resources. It should be pointed out here that the study carried out reveals a clear gap between the institution's political decisions and the realities observed in the field.

In a final point, through a literature review on global trends in EMI, Gütte (2024) presents a critical perspective. Within this framework, Gütte synthesizes the universal challenges associated with linguistic equity. The author questions the idea that EMI automatically improves English proficiency.

## **2. Methodology**

### ***2.1 Context***

The implementation of EMI across scientific and technical disciplines in Algerian universities, a strategic national policy initiated recently, represents a pivotal transformation in the higher education landscape. This significant shift underscores the nation's commitment to internationalization and the enhancement of academic visibility. This transition, motivated by a desire to internationalize and raise the profile of Algerian research, raises many questions about the preparation of teachers. With this in mind, the present study focuses specifically on the University Ziane Achour in Djelfa, an institution where teachers recently took part in ministerial training dedicated to teaching techniques in English. As previously mentioned, the aim is to qualitatively assess the perceived relevance and usefulness of this training by the actors involved in this specific context.

### ***2.2 Participants***

The sample for this study is made up of 12 teacher-researchers working at the University of Djelfa, from various scientific and technical disciplines (i.e., exact sciences, technology, natural and life sciences). These participants were specifically selected because they met the essential criterion of having actually attended the ministerial training course on teaching techniques in English, the subject of our evaluation. Their direct experience is therefore central to this qualitative investigation.

The aim is to understand the extent to which the training has met their expectations and professional needs, particularly from the perspective of English-mediated content teaching. By analyzing their perceptions and opinions, our investigation seeks to provide valuable feedback on the perceived effectiveness of this professional development strategy, and to identify possible avenues of improvement for future training initiatives in the Algerian University context.

### **2.3 Procedures**

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire survey specifically developed for the present research. This qualitative instrument is designed to gather detailed data on teachers' perceptions of the usefulness, relevance and appropriateness of the training they had received. We also examine their experiences during training, and their expressed needs for the transition to teaching in English. The questionnaire is administered individually, thus guaranteeing the anonymity of responses.

### **3. Results & Analysis**

In this section, we will analyze the responses obtained from our respondents. The aim is to take a close look at the impact of this training on the teachers concerned.

*Q1. How long have you been teaching at the University of Djelfa?*

| Criteria          | Number of teachers | Rates       |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Less than 5 years | 4                  | 33.3%       |
| 5-10 years        | 3                  | 25%         |
| 10-15 years       | 3                  | 25%         |
| Over 15 years     | 2                  | 16.7%       |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>12</b>          | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 1. Length of service**

Table 1 shows a relatively balanced distribution of teachers according to seniority. The most represented category is “Less than 5 years” at 33.3%, followed by “5-10 years” and “10-15 years” at 25% each. Teachers with more than 15 years’ experience account for only 16.7%.

The distribution illustrates a potentially young teaching staff at the University of Djelfa, with a high proportion of new teachers. This relative youth could influence their adaptation to EMI. In this respect, more experienced teachers may have more established pedagogical habits, while younger teachers may be more open to new methods, but lack general experience.

*Q2. In which discipline(s) do you teach?*

| Sector                | Number of teachers |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| IT (computer science) | 3                  |
| Mathematics           | 2                  |
| Biology               | 2                  |
| Electronic            | 2                  |
| Veterinary science    | 1                  |
| Biochemistry          | 1                  |
| Earth Sciences        | 1                  |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>12</b>          |

**Table 2. Education sectors**

Responses to the open-ended question on teaching discipline reveal a diversity of specialties within the sample. Computer Science is the most frequently cited specialty (3 responses), followed by Mathematics, Biology and Electronics (2 responses each). Veterinary Science, Biochemistry, and Earth Sciences are mentioned only once.

The diversity of teaching specialties represented, ranging from Computer Science to Biology, suggests that the transition to EMI involves a wide range of scientific and technical fields at the University of Djelfa. The relative predominance of scientific fields may reflect the composition of the teaching staff taking part in the survey. We can also say that disciplinary diversity implies potentially different needs in terms of EMI training. In this sense, each field may have its own vocabulary and teaching conventions.

*Q3. Before the training, what was your experience of teaching in English?*

| Answer                            | Number teachers | Rates       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Null                              | 5               | 41.7%       |
| Limited (a few courses/modules)   | 4               | 33.3%       |
| Regular (several courses/modules) | 2               | 16.7%       |
| Extensive (most of my teachings)  | 1               | 8.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>12</b>       | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 3. Experience prior to training**

Responses to the question on prior experience in EMI show a majority of teachers (41.7%) declaring no experience in the subject prior to training. Specifically, a third (33.3%) indicated experience limited to a few courses or modules. Only a minority of teachers declared regular (16.7%) or extensive (8.3%) experience of teaching in English. This profile reveals a teaching population that was generally new to EMI at the time of the training.

It can be argued that the high proportion of teachers with no (41.7%) or limited (33.3%) experience of EMI prior to training underlines the scale of the change brought about by the transition to English. This highlights the crucial need for appropriate initial and in-service training, capable of taking account of this lack of prior experience. At another level, the presence of a minority of teachers with regular or extensive experience (totaling 25% of respondents) could be enhanced. These experienced profiles represent a valuable potential resource, able to share their good practices and support the integration of the EMI within the teaching community.

*Q4. How would you rate the usefulness of the training you have taken for your teaching practice in English?*

| Criteria        | Number of teachers | Rates       |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Very useful     | 4                  | 33.3%       |
| Useful          | 5                  | 41.7%       |
| Not very useful | 2                  | 16.7%       |
| No need         | 0                  | 0.0%        |
| No opinion      | 1                  | 8.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>12</b>          | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 4. Teachers' assessment of training**

Clearly, the teachers' assessment of the usefulness of training is overwhelmingly positive. In this view, with 75% of respondents rated it as "useful" (41.7%) or "very useful" (33.3%). Only a minority (16.7%) considered the training "not very useful", and no teacher considered it "useless". Only one teacher had no opinion (8.3%).

The majority of teachers considered the training to be useful or very useful. This tells us that the training has, on the whole, brought positive results. This could indicate a

considerable match between the training objectives and the teachers' expectations. However, the presence of the "not very useful" response and the "no opinion" comment, albeit in a minority, point to possible areas for improvement. On the whole, the training seems to have provided a solid grounding, but there are still needs in terms of practice, concrete examples and perhaps more in-depth study.

*Q5. What aspects of the training did you find most beneficial? (multiple choices possible)*

| Training aspect                          | Number of responses | Rates |
|--|---------------------|-------|
| Improve my skills                        | 7                   | 58.3% |
| Acquire specific EMI teaching techniques | 8                   | 66.7% |
| Exchanges with other teachers            | 5                   | 41.7% |
| Knowledge of available resources         | 3                   | 25.0% |
| Other (specify)                          | 2                   | 16.7% |

**Table 5. Training benefits**

From this table, we can see that the pedagogical aspects specific to EMI (66.7%) and the improvement of language skills (58.3%) are the benefits of training most frequently cited by teachers. Similarly, exchanges with colleagues are also deemed important (41.7%). On the other hand, knowledge of available resources was the least mentioned aspect (25%). Two teachers cited other benefits, such as "situational awareness" and "personalized advice". It should be noted here that the possibility of multiple choices reflects the diversity of perceived benefits.

The fact that the acquisition of pedagogical techniques specific to EMI is the most cited aspect (66.7%) reveals that the training met a crucial need for teachers, over and above mere linguistic improvement. For its part, the importance attached to exchanges with colleagues (41.7%) underlines the value of sharing experiences and the collaborative dimension in this context of transition. Finally, lesser importance given to knowledge of resources (25%) could indicate either a lack of relevant resources, or a lack of communication on the subject, or, in other cases, a lack of time.

*Q6. What difficulties do you encounter (or have you encountered) in implementing teaching in English? (several choices possible)*

| Criteria                                       | Number of teachers | Rates |
|--|--------------------|-------|
| My own command of English                      | 4                  | 33.3% |
| Heterogeneous levels of English among students | 9                  | 75.0% |
| Lack of suitable teaching materials            | 6                  | 50.0% |
| The difficulty of adapting my methods          | 5                  | 41.7% |
| Lack of time                                   | 7                  | 58.3% |
| Lack of institutional support                  | 3                  | 25.0% |
| Other (specify)                                | 1                  | 8.3%  |

**Table 6. Training difficulties**

Teachers cite various difficulties in implementing EMI. According to the results obtained, the most frequently mentioned problem is the students' heterogeneous levels of English (75%). Lack of time (58.3%) and lack of suitable teaching materials (50%) are also major difficulties. The adaptation of teaching methods (41.7%) and the teachers' own command of English (33.3%) are cited less frequently. Lack of institutional support is

mentioned by 25% of respondents. One teacher mentions “student resistance” as an additional difficulty.

It appears that the heterogeneity of students’ English levels (75%) is the main difficulty, underlining the importance of accurate diagnostic assessment and pedagogical differentiation strategies. The lack of time (58.3%) and materials (50%) highlights the material constraints that can hamper the quality of EMI. Another point to raise is that the difficulty of adapting methods (41.7%) may be linked to a lack of specific ongoing training in EMI didactics, beyond language training.

*Q7. Did you modify your teaching practices (methods, materials, assessment, etc.) as a result of the training?*

| Answer             | Number of teachers | Rates       |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Yes, significantly | 3                  | 25.0%       |
| Yes, slightly      | 6                  | 50.0%       |
| No                 | 2                  | 16.7%       |
| Not yet            | 1                  | 8.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>12</b>          | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 7. Impact of training on teaching practices**

We find that the majority of teachers (75%) declare that they have modified their teaching practices as a result of the training, whether slightly (50%) or significantly (25%). On the other hand, only 16.7% have not modified their practices, and 8.3% are considering doing so. The modifications mentioned concern support materials (visuals, bilingual glossaries), speaking speed, integration of English interactions, and adaptation of assessments. This indicates at least a partial impact of training on teaching practices.

The fact that the majority of teachers (75%) claim to have modified their practices, even slightly, indicates a real impact of the training, but also a gradual appropriation of the new skills. The modifications cited (visual aids, flow, interactions, glossaries, assessments) are concrete and relevant adaptations to EMI, aimed at facilitating student understanding and engagement. Finally, the fact that some teachers have not yet modified their practices can be explained by a lack of time, confidence or persistent difficulties.

*Q8. In your opinion, what are the priority training needs for teachers who teach courses in English?*

| Category of need              | Number of teachers | Sample answers  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Perfecting your English       | 4                  | Improve my oral fluency.<br>Enrich my technical vocabulary.<br>Work on my pronunciation.<br>Consolidate my grammar skills.  |
| EMI pedagogy and didactics    | 3                  | Learn to adapt my lessons to different levels of English.<br>Discover interactive methods in English.<br>Managing linguistic heterogeneity.<br>Integrate language into the teaching of my subject.<br>Designing assessments in English. |
| Access to resources and media | 3                  | Access to authentic documents in English.<br>Use appropriate digital platforms.   |

|                           |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Accompaniment and support | 2 | Benefit from personalized support.<br>Exchange ideas with experienced colleagues.<br>To have time to train. |
|---------------------------|---|---|

**Table 8.** *Teachers' priority needs*

Table 8 makes it clear that teachers express a variety of needs in terms of continuing education. The most frequently cited need concerns the pedagogy and didactics of EMI (5 responses), followed by language improvement (4 responses). Coaching and support (3 responses) and access to appropriate teaching resources and materials (2 responses) are also mentioned. In line with this, teachers express specific requests, ranging from the improvement of specific language skills (pronunciation, technical vocabulary) to the acquisition of teaching methods adapted to EMI.

The diversity of the needs expressed underlines the complexity of the transition to EMI, which is not just a question of language skills. The strong demand for EMI pedagogy and didactics (5 responses) confirms the need for specific training, going beyond general English, and incorporating teaching strategies adapted to a non-native audience. In addition, the need for support, including exchanges with colleagues, reveals the importance of a collaborative approach and strong institutional support to make this transition a success.

#### 4. Discussion

This qualitative study of teachers at the University of Djelfa reveals a generally positive attitude towards the transition to English as the language of instruction. However, this perception is qualified by a number of important concerns. Teachers express a need for ongoing training, not only linguistic, but also and above all pedagogical, to adapt their teaching methods to an EMI context. In a nutshell, difficulties of various kinds are noted, including the heterogeneity of students' English levels, lack of time and suitable teaching materials, and, to a lesser extent, teachers' own command of English.

Analysis of the questionnaire goes some way towards confirming our initial hypothesis: teachers, generally in favor of the EMI, express a significant need for further training, particularly in EMI didactics. The question of the adequacy of initial training to the requirements of the EMI is clearly raised. Teachers' perceptions illustrate an awareness of the challenges to be met, but also a willingness to adapt. The heterogeneity of students' levels of English appears to be a major difficulty, underlining the need for a differentiated pedagogical approach.

On a comparable level, we can say that our results are in line with concerns expressed in other EMI implementation contexts, notably in Italy (Polli, 2024) and China (Güller, 2024), where the need for training that goes beyond mere linguistic improvement is emphasized. From this perspective, the need for a specific pedagogical approach, incorporating strategies such as "translanguaging" (Güller, 2024), is also highlighted. What needs to be noted here is that the particularity of the Algerian context, with the coexistence of Arabic, French, and English, and the potential "resistance" of students, mentioned by one teacher, is not unlike the challenges identified by Costa (2024) in the Italian context. In his study, Costa emphasizes the importance of local sociolinguistic considerations. However, in contrast to earlier studies (Birech & Moussaoui, 2025), our present survey shows, even if only partially, a genuine awareness of the advantages of the English language.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of teachers at the University of Djelfa regarding the transition to English as a language of instruction (EMI) in scientific and technical courses. The aim is to understand their needs, difficulties, and expectations in the face of this major change in language policy. It is clear from the survey that, while the strategic interest of EMI for internationalization is recognized, its effective implementation requires particular attention to the human dimension, and in particular to the preparation of teachers.

The results highlight a paradox. On the one hand, teachers are generally in favor of EMI, and are aware of its potential benefits for the visibility of research, the attractiveness of the university, and the employability of students. On the other hand, they express a crying need for further training, not only to consolidate their language skills, but above all to acquire pedagogical tools adapted to teaching in English. The heterogeneity of students' English levels, the lack of resources and time, and sometimes a form of resistance, are all challenges that complicate the transition. This is not to call into question the validity of the language policy, but to emphasize the importance of appropriate support.

In conclusion, the success of the transition to EMI at the University of Djelfa, and more widely in Algeria, depends not only on a political decision, but also on teachers' real needs being taken into account. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that high-quality in-service training, focused on the didactics of EMI, the sharing of best practices, and the provision of appropriate resources are basic conditions if this ambitious transition is to produce the expected positive effects. Similarly, investment in human capital is needed to transform this language policy into a successful pedagogical reality.

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