

# **Challenges and Perspectives in EMI Teacher Training: Insights and Practical Strategies from a Year of Empowering University Faculty**

**Rahma Zeggada**

**University of Batna 1**

## **Abstract:**

This presentation sheds light on the results of the English Medium Instruction (EMI) training program designed and implemented for faculty members from the Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences and the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Batna 1. The curriculum aimed to enhance specialized vocabulary and terminology by integrating digital tools with pedagogical methods and essential academic English skills. In addition, learning materials in the sessions involved the preparation of multilingual glossaries, the adaptation of materials to fit within an English-language academic system, and the ethical use of Web-based resources. The presentation offers a good account of successful strategies underpinning educators' capacity to cope with pedagogical and linguistic changes and failures and successes experienced. Recommendations for further EMI training programs are presented to help other trainers to develop a successful EMI model.

## **Keywords:**

English Medium Instruction (EMI), training program, university faculty, multilingual terminology, glossaries and technical vocabulary, online platforms resources, transitioning to EMI

## **1/ Introduction:**

In 2023, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research adopted English language as a medium of instruction. However, university instructors are accustomed to teaching either in Arabic or French. It became clear that the new shift to English Medium Instruction in the Algerian universities made it compulsory for an intensive training that initiated a host of challenges for faculty used to teach in French and Arabic languages. This policy objective was focused on seeking to harmonize Algeria with international academic standards and to promote internationalization of Algeria's higher education system. Nevertheless, too rapid transition has left behind scores of educators trying to make linguistic and pedagogical changes. This contribution is a reflection on the use of a 1-year EMI training program that will allow university teachers to acquire tools with which they can manage this move and will address practical means by which English may be incorporated into their teaching.

## **2/ Theoretical Background**

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) refers to the use of English to teach academic subjects in non-English-speaking countries. It has been implemented worldwide as universities strive to become more competitive and raise university visibility (Macaro, 2018).

We based our theoretical background on the theories of Richards (2022) and Hutchinson Waters (1987) on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). We gave special attention was given to coordinate teaching of English instruction with the unique requirements of Architecture, Agronomy, and Veterinary fields.

According to Richards (2022), EMI involves not just language acquisition but also pedagogical techniques that integrate language and content learning. This model demands the teacher to be at the same time content specialist and language prompter.

Pedagogical Considerations and ESP within EMI are multiple. "In EMI, the role of the teacher extends beyond content delivery; they are language facilitators who

must develop strategies to ensure students' comprehension and engagement”  
Richards, J. C. (2022)

Modern theories tailored for EMI pedagogy suggests the evolving role of teachers as facilitators of both content and language, which is essential in non-native English contexts.

The Future of EMI and Internationalization is a forward-looking perspective on how EMI can elevate institutions on an international stage, while also noting the importance of cultural sensitivity in its application. Wilkinson, R. (2020) the transformative nature of EMI, advocating for institutional adaptation and new teaching approaches to ensure its success. Galloway, N., & Rose, H. (2021)

In Non-Native Contexts, the objective is to emphasize the importance of adapting EMI to suit the local linguistic environment, which can be critical in places like Algeria transitioning from French to English. Baker, W., & Hüttner, J. (2019)

### **3/ Pedagogical Frameworks:**

The training program was based upon three major educational theories:

- a. Pedagogy: Traditional teacher-centered learning, which focuses on structured content delivery.
- b. Andragogy: The theory of adult learning, which focuses on self-ecopreneurship learning, for education and professional development.
- c. Heutagogy: Demonstrates support for autonomous learning, so as to enable teachers to modify materials and teach strategies autonomously.

These are the very frameworks that were of critical importance in designing a program capable of serving the diverse teaching styles and levels of pedagogical expertise among faculty.

### **4/ Methodology**

#### **A. Participants:**

The course was run for two semesters and consisted of 35 university teachers from two institutes: the Institutes of Architecture Urban Planning and the Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences and Food Technology, at the University of Batna 1. We recruited participants based on both their readiness to use EMI and their reliance on English in their teaching process.

### **B. Training Modules:**

The training comprised various modules, each tailored to specific academic needs:

a/ Academic English Proficiency: Focused on enhancing vocabulary, sentence structure, and academic tone.

b/ Digital Tools for EMI: Training on using online resources like the Academic Phrasebank, concordancers, and academic collocations and idioms

c/ Building Multilingual Glossaries: Workshops for the construction of parallel corpora and glossaries of technical terminology.

d/ Pedagogical Skills in EMI: Methods for delivery of content in English, for managing classroom communication, and for evaluating the comprehension of students.

## **5/ Workshops and Exercises**

### **a. Academic English Activities & Tests**

In order to improve the participants academic English skills, tailored exercises were dedicated to improve their phonetics awareness like:

- Sentence Construction: Attention was drawn to the four main sentence types: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex. Attention was also paid to the common mistakes in sentence structure, which are to be avoided (run-on sentences), to whittle down (hedging), and to amplify (boosting).

- b. **Vocabulary Building:** To enrich the technical lexicon, the Oxford phrase list and academic collocation lists are employed.
  
- c. **Practical Assignments:** Teachers were asked to write abstracts, research papers, and some presentation slides of their lectures in English.

## **6/ Digital Tool Integration**

Faculty teachers were introduced to various digital resources:

- a. **Concordancers:** are used to identifying academic collocations and phrases common in research.
- b. **Specialized Terminology and Pronunciation:**

Workshops on technical aspects, such as the acquisition of pronunciation for specialized vocabulary, especially in the domains of veterinary sciences and architecture. We adopted Audio resources and phonetic symbols were used to improve clarity and accuracy.

- c. **Tests and Assessments throughout the training:**

Formative and Final Assessments of the training program:

The program began with a formative test to assess participants' initial English proficiency and familiarity with EMI concepts. This was followed by:

**Vocabulary Size Test:** is dedicated to measuring growth in academic vocabulary. Teachers were given this exercise during the first session of the training.

**Pronunciation Drills:** this exercise aimed at evaluating improvement in technical term pronunciation.

**Feedback Surveys:** Collected qualitative data on participants' perceptions of their progress.

## 7/ Performance Analysis

Table 1: Improvement in Test Scores Before and After Training

Assessment Type	Average Score (Initial)	Average Score (Final)
Academic Vocabulary Test	65%	85%
Academic Vocabulary Test	70%	88%
Pronunciation Accuracy	60%	80%

Participants demonstrated substantial gains throughout all parts, which suggests the successful implementation of the training assignment.

## 8/ Challenges and Reflections

### a/ Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

The switch from French to English was opposed, particularly by faculty having little exposure to English. Cultural nuances in teaching styles also posed challenges.

### b/ Technological Limitations

Although digital learning tools improved the learning experience, some participants struggled because of insufficient access to digital devices and digital competence.

### **c/ Successes and Obstacles:**

The essential objective was to elevate confidence in the English language for teaching and the Internet

Enhanced collaboration among faculty from different disciplines.

### **9/ Recommendations for Future EMI Programs**

In the light of the obtained results, the following proposals are forwarded to conduct further EMI activities:

- I. Continuous Professional Development: Regular workshops were organized to maintain the foreign language proficiency.
- II. Blended Learning Approaches: Combining one and face-to-face sessions for flexibility.
- III. Institutional Support: is supposed to enable access to digital resources and training in their respective specialities.

### **10/ Conclusion**

The EMI training program at the University of Batna 1 has proved the possibility of improving academic English skills for the University teachers. Notwithstanding the difficulties imposed by the shift from French to English language, the evidence indicates that, in theory, a well-defined program that includes pedagogical practice, the use of computer tools, and targeted linguistic preparation can contribute significantly to enhance the training of faculty in respect of EMI. With increasing applications of English in the higher education of Algeria, continued support and adjustment of EMI models will remain essential in the event of a successful long-term application.

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