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SHAPING ALGERIA'S EMI FUTURE: ADVANCING BEYOND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE TO ACHIEVE PEDAGOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract: The increasing adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algerian universities has drawn considerable attention to the challenges and opportunities associated with its implementation. This three-year longitudinal study examines the landscape of EMI integration at Constantine 3 University, focusing on two pivotal phases. The baseline study, conducted in 2023 with twenty-eight (28) faculty members, revealed major concerns related to instructors' language proficiency and the preservation of academic standards during the early stages of EMI adoption. Building upon these initial findings, the current phase (2025) adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining in-depth interviews with twenty (20) faculty members and institutional document analysis, to examine the role of systemic support structures in addressing persistent barriers. The study focuses specifically on disparities between STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and humanities disciplines and the emerging role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioners in bridging these gaps. The study findings reveal three enduring institutional deficiencies: uneven professional development pathways, the absence of standardized frameworks for material adaptation, and limited collaboration between subject-matter faculty and ESP specialists. Importantly, the data demonstrate that strategic ESP integration, through initiatives such as co-teaching and discipline-specific language scaffolding, can effectively mitigate 65% of the pedagogical challenges identified in 2023. The study concludes by proposing a tripartite framework for EMI enhancement: (a) university-level EMI resource centers to offer centralized guidance and training; (b) discipline-specific teaching partnerships to cultivate collaborative expertise; and (c) diagnostic tools to assess student preparedness and promote equitable access to EMI programs. These empirically grounded recommendations align with Algeria's 2030 academic internationalization agenda and provide practical insights into EMI advancement within multilingual higher education contexts in the Global South.

Keywords: Algerian higher education, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Global South, multilingual education, pedagogical transformation, STEM and humanities disciplines

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1. Introduction

The global proliferation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) reflects a salient trend towards enhanced intercultural communication within diverse academic milieus, concurrently promoting internationalization and the standardization of educational qualifications (Marcjanik, 2023). Consistent with this international trajectory, the Algerian Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MESRS) initiated a structured, multi-stage strategy for EMI implementation, formally enacted through Décrets Ministériels N° 1433 and N° 1651 (September 2022). This regulatory framework established the foundational directives for subsequent operationalization, encompassing mandatory online pedagogical training programs via the DualEdx platform (September 2023) and the deployment of B2-level English language training modules on the MOODLE learning management system (July-September 2023), initially prioritizing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. By March 2025, the MESRS extended the mandate for EMI adoption across the entirety of the national university system, including medical, dental, and pharmaceutical sciences by September 2025.

Despite the strategic intent to align Algerian higher education with global standards and enhance graduate employability, this rapid transition to EMI has introduced significant pedagogical and linguistic challenges for university instructors and students (Alam et al., 2022). These challenges encompass limitations in English proficiency, insufficient instructional resources, motivational impediments, and resistance to pedagogical innovation (Bouguebs, 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that faculty and students experience difficulties adapting to EMI, particularly within STEM disciplines where the complexity of technical terminology exacerbates these issues (Ouarniki, 2023). Consequently, the efficacy of EMI hinges not solely on linguistic competence but also on the presence of robust institutional support systems, including targeted training initiatives, comprehensive language support services, and access to contextually relevant pedagogical materials (Benrabah, 2013).

The implementation of EMI at Constantine 3 University, in its efforts to align with international standards and enhance graduate employability, has revealed systemic challenges that are not solely linguistic. Notably, our 2023 baseline study indicated significant instructional strain reported by faculty across various disciplines. STEM instructors faced difficulties due to the technical demands of English disciplinary terminology, while humanities faculty expressed concerns about conceptual precision. These findings highlight the inadequacy of approaches focused solely on individual language proficiency, pointing instead to the need for institutional frameworks that address discipline-specific pedagogical exigencies.

This disciplinary complexity necessitates a critical examination of how institutional structures mediate EMI effectiveness—a gap this study addresses by analyzing policy implementation, resource allocation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. At Constantine 3 University, a pronounced policy-practice dichotomy has emerged one year post-EMI launch, corroborating Marcjanik's (2023) assertion that successful adoption requires "comprehensive institutional scaffolding" (p. 112), including both directive frameworks and material support.

Within the evolving educational landscape, ESP practitioners assume a pivotal role in addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with EMI. By leveraging their integrated technological, pedagogical, and organizational expertise (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015), ESP specialists provide targeted support essential for effectively navigating the complexities inherent in EMI contexts. Emerging research indicates a positive correlation between active collaboration between ESP practitioners and content faculty and improved student satisfaction (Suzuki, 2023; Bouguebs, 2020), as well as more effective EMI delivery. However, such collaborative models remain underdeveloped within the Algerian higher education system.

This study, therefore, investigates the following principal research questions:

(1) How has EMI implementation at Constantine 3 University evolved over three years in response to national policy directives, Circulars 1433/2022, 1998/2022, 49/2025?
(2) What are the perceptions and experiences of STEM and humanities faculty regarding systemic support structures and the role of ESP practitioners in facilitating EMI?
(3) To what extent do institutional practices in Algerian universities comply with the mandated objectives and implementation frameworks of EMI policies in higher education?

These inquiries are particularly salient in the context of Algeria's 2030 Higher Education Strategy, which explicitly links the success of EMI initiatives to aspirations for improved international university rankings.

The significance of this research lies in its dual theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances the understanding of EMI implementation within multilingual contexts where English interacts with both languages of colonial heritage and indigenous languages. Practically, it aims to propose a replicable institutional support framework for effective EMI integration, informed by longitudinal faculty data and rigorous policy analysis, thereby illuminating the essential structures required for sustainable reform within Algerian and comparable higher education contexts in the Global South.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Global Shift Toward EMI and Its Institutional Implications

The global expansion of EMI reflects a broader paradigm of academic internationalization aimed at enhancing student mobility, increasing institutional visibility, and facilitating access to global scientific knowledge (Marcjanik, 2023). EMI is often framed as a strategic response to globalization, serving as a lingua franca that transcends national and cultural boundaries to foster academic collaboration and communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds. EMI research has tended to focus heavily on the Englishisation of higher education as the result of European integrated mobility initiatives such as the Erasmus programme (Rose et al., 2022). However, its implementation in non-Anglophone contexts frequently reveals systemic tensions between ambitious policy aspirations and the complex realities of local educational environments (Idri, 2025; Dearden, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2015).

Empirical research highlights systemic challenges impeding the efficacy and equitable implementation of EMI. In a comprehensive review of existing studies concerning the challenges associated with implementing EMI in higher education across different contexts, including global, Asian, and specifically Bangladeshi perspectives, Alam et al. (2022) identify three critical barriers: (1) insufficient linguistic competence among students and faculty, (2) a deficit of discipline-specific pedagogical training for EMI contexts, and (3) the scarcity of localized teaching materials. These findings align with studies by Sarker et al. (2021) and Akter and Mitul (2020), which demonstrate that EMI adoption has yielded limited educational outcomes, disproportionately affecting students from non-English-medium backgrounds (Alam et al., 2022, p. 27). Such students often encounter comprehension barriers due to limited English proficiency, hindering both lecture assimilation and academic expression (Ouarniki, 2023 and Sahki, 2025). Compounding these issues, the lack of institutional support mechanisms, particularly in disciplines demanding specialized terminology, further undermines content mastery and classroom participation.

In the Global South, EMI adoption is embedded within intricate sociolinguistic landscapes characterized by multilingualism, colonial language legacies, and chronic resource constraints (Hamid et al., 2013). Algeria provides a salient example of these dynamics. As a country with a post-colonial linguistic hierarchy dominated by French and Arabic, the abrupt

policy shift toward EMI in STEM fields has intensified debates concerning language equity, cultural identity, and pedagogical feasibility (Benrabah, 2013). The rapid transition has exposed significant institutional shortcomings, including fragmented faculty training programs, limited availability of localized teaching materials, and the absence of standardized frameworks for curricular adaptation to English (Sahki, 2025).

The implementation of EMI in linguistically diverse educational contexts presents significant sociolinguistic concerns, particularly regarding the marginalization of indigenous languages and the potential diminution of linguistic pluralism in academia (Benrabah, 2013). This tension between global academic integration and local linguistic preservation necessitates the development of nuanced EMI policy frameworks (Rouaghe, Idri, & Assassi, 2024) that simultaneously address the imperatives of international competitiveness and the safeguarding of regional educational identities.

Effective institutional adoption of EMI mandates a multifaceted approach encompassing: (1) systematic faculty development programs specifically designed for EMI pedagogy, (2) robust linguistic support infrastructure for both students and instructors, and (3) strategic resource allocation to ensure that EMI implementation enhances rather than compromises educational quality and equitable access (Akıncıoğlu, 2023, p. 14).

In summary, while EMI presents distinct advantages in facilitating internationalization and improving graduate employability, its efficacy is contingent upon adopting context-sensitive approaches that systematically address the linguistic, pedagogical, and sociocultural challenges prevalent in non-Anglophone higher education systems.

2.2. Challenges in EMI Implementation

The implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) frequently rests on assumptions regarding the linguistic proficiency of both faculty and students. However, empirical research consistently reveals significant and persistent gaps in these competencies. Instructors often resort to strategies such as code-switching or simplifying content to alleviate comprehension difficulties, which, while pragmatic, may inadvertently compromise academic rigor and depth (Airey, 2015; Zenkova & Khamitova, 2017; Alam et al., 2022). For instance, a study conducted in Turkey found that 60% of STEM faculty reported dedicating disproportionate amounts of time to language-related tasks, thereby diverting attention from core disciplinary content (Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018, p. 3). Similarly, research in Saudi Arabia highlighted students' struggles with discipline-specific terminology, revealing the insufficiency of generic language training programs to meet specialized academic demands (Alam et al., 2022).

A pervasive issue documented in EMI scholarship is the disjunction between policy directives and institutional capacities. In Vietnam, top-down EMI policies have been criticized for emphasizing international university rankings at the expense of addressing localized educational needs, resulting in faculty disenchantment and uneven policy enactment (Pham & Ngoc, 2020; Apple et al., 2020). This phenomenon is mirrored in Algeria, where the EMI rollout mandated by Circulars 1433/2022 and 1998/2022 during the 2022–2025 period has exposed systemic vulnerabilities, including but not limited to:

- The inadequacy of generic language courses to meet discipline-specific linguistic requirements (Bouguebs, 2023).
- A pronounced scarcity of localized instructional materials, such as laboratory protocols and medical case studies, essential for effective EMI pedagogy (Soleimani et al., 2021).

- Tensions between compliance-driven policy demands and faculty reports indicating a lack of consultation in decision-making processes, compounded by insufficient funding for EMI initiatives (Ouarniki, 2024).

These challenges resonate with broader global critiques framing EMI as a "policy without practice," wherein institutional infrastructures and resources lag behind the rhetorical commitments to internationalization and language policy reform (Sharma, 2022). Such discrepancies underscore the urgent need for context-sensitive policy design and comprehensive support mechanisms to bridge the gap between EMI aspirations and practical realities.

2.3. The Role of ESP Practitioners in EMI Setting

ESP practitioners have gained increasing recognition as essential mediators in EMI environments, owing to their dual specialization in disciplinary language and pedagogical adaptation (Hyland, 2021; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). Their expertise proves particularly vital in developing curricula and instructional materials that bridge the linguistic and subject-specific requirements of EMI courses (Akıncıoğlu, 2023). This necessity stems from EMI's dual demands: not only general English proficiency but also mastery of discipline-specific lexical items, discourse conventions, and communicative competencies across specialized fields such as engineering, medicine, business, and social sciences (Alam et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence demonstrates the tangible benefits of their involvement, with Airey's (2015) study of co-teaching models in Hungarian and Swedish universities reporting 30% higher student satisfaction rates. Nevertheless, institutional barriers persist, particularly resistance to interdisciplinary collaboration. Research from Polish and Spanish EMI contexts reveals how the exclusion of ESP specialists from curricular decision-making perpetuates fragmented approaches to content-language integration (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015; Doiz et al., 2012)

The marginalization of ESP practitioners in Algerian universities remains a serious problem. Although Circular 1433/2022 calls for subject-specific language training, most departments at Constantine 3 University (19 out of 22 surveyed) have no system for ESP teachers to work with subject professors (Ouarniki, 2023). This shows a clear failure to put policy into practice. Algeria could learn from countries like Singapore and the Netherlands, where language experts regularly help create EMI course content through official teamwork arrangements (Curdt et al., 2023).

2.4. Gaps in Existing EMI Research

Although the existent literature on EMI has extensively documented individual-level factors such as faculty and student language proficiency and pedagogical strategies, there remains a notable paucity of research addressing the systemic reforms necessary for sustainable and effective EMI implementation (Alam et al., 2022). Specifically, several critical gaps can be identified:

- The majority of studies employ cross-sectional designs, providing only static snapshots that fail to capture the dynamic evolution of institutional practices and policies over time (Marcjanik, 2023).
- Research often neglects the pivotal role of university-level EMI support units, discipline-specific pedagogical training, and the deployment of diagnostic tools to assess and enhance student preparedness (Mortensen, 2015; Akıncıoğlu, 2023; Rouagh, Idri & Assassi, 2024).
- Few investigations critically examine the interplay between national-level EMI mandates—such as Algeria's recent policy directives—and local institutional

constraints, including resource distribution, faculty autonomy, and contextual agency (Said & Jepson, 2022).

Addressing these lacunae, the present study adopts a longitudinal design spanning three years to explore how institutional structures and processes influence EMI outcomes. It advances the discourse by proposing a tripartite analytical framework centered on ESP pedagogy integration, alignment between policy and practice, and the systematic use of diagnostic tools to bridge systemic divides in EMI implementation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a three-year longitudinal sequential mixed-methods design (2023–2025) to critically investigate the implementation of EMI at Salah Boubnider Constantine 3 University, Algeria. The university operates within a linguistically diverse and institutionally complex context, where empirical research on EMI practices and the effectiveness of accompanying support mechanisms remains limited, despite national policy mandates. Addressing this research gap, the study specifically investigates the efficacy of systemic support structures and the evolving role of ESP practitioners in advancing EMI implementation. The research is organized into two interrelated phases:

- **Exploratory Baseline Phase (2023):** A mixed-methods questionnaire captured faculty perceptions, challenges, and readiness for EMI during its early implementation.
- **Systemic Analysis Phase (2025):** Qualitative interviews and institutional document analysis examined the alignment of practice with policy.

This sequential design facilitates the capture of the evolving patterns in EMI implementation over time. It offers a deep understanding of faculty experiences, institutional responses, and policy implementation gaps.

3.2. Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- How has EMI implementation at Constantine 3 University evolved over three years in response to national policy directives, Circulars 1433/2022, 1998/2022, 49/2025?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of STEM and humanities faculty regarding systemic support structures and the role of ESP practitioners in facilitating EMI?
- To what extent do institutional practices in Algerian universities comply with the mandated objectives and implementation frameworks of EMI policies in higher education?

The findings of this research hold significant theoretical implications for understanding EMI implementation in multilingual settings and offer practical insights for policymakers and practitioners in Algeria and beyond.

3.3. Research Population

The study focuses on faculty members at Salah Boubnider Constantine 3 University who were actively involved in EMI implementation during the 2023–2025 period. The 2023 phase involved 28 faculty participants from different disciplines, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and humanities. Convenience sampling was used due to the exploratory nature of the baseline phase and limited initial access to participants.

For the 2025 phase**,** 20 faculty members were purposefully selected. This means the participants represent the faculty engaged in EMI delivery and/or involved in institutional EMI planning.

3.4. Data Collection Methods

To investigate the implementation of EMI at Constantine 3 University, this study employed mixed-methods data collection across two phases (2023 baseline and 2025 systemic analysis). Data collection involved two primary methods:

Phase 1 (2023): Baseline Data Collection

In the 2023 study (Bouguebs, 2023), the researcher employed a mixed-methods questionnaire combining quantitative items such as Likert-scale questions to assess language proficiency, EMI readiness, and perceived challenges. The qualitative items included open-ended questions exploring institutional support gaps, pedagogical adaptations, and ESP collaboration needs. The questionnaires were distributed electronically to 28 faculty members teaching EMI courses during the 2023–2024 academic year.

Phase 2 (2025): Systemic Analysis Data Collection

Building on the findings from Phase 1, Phase 2 concentrated on identifying systemic barriers and potential solutions through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 faculty members selected via purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of EMI experience and institutional roles. These interviews aimed to capture participants' evolving experiences with EMI implementation and perceptions of institutional support mechanisms, such as training programs and resource allocation. To facilitate participant engagement and richer data collection, interviews were conducted in Arabic, French, or English according to each participant's preference. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and subsequently translated into English for analysis.

The document analysis involved a comprehensive review of institutional policy documents. Three key Ministerial Decrees from Algeria's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) were analyzed to contextualize EMI implementation:

- **Circular No. 1433/2022/أ.ع (September 28, 2022)**: Mandated ESP training programs targeting B2/C1 proficiency (CEFR) and discipline-specific terminology modules.
- **Circular No. 1998/2022/أ.ع (December 22, 2022)**: Introduced digital platforms (DualEdx/MOODLE) for EMI training, prioritizing STEM disciplines.
- **Circular No. 49/2025/م.ع.ت (March 26, 2025)**: Required universities to submit progress reports on EMI implementation (training, resources, student preparedness).

These documents were systematically reviewed to map policy mandates, such as adopting the DualEdx platform, ESP training requirements, and CIEL training, and identify discrepancies between official institutional policies and faculty-reported experiences.

The study employed a triangulation approach, integrating interview narratives, survey data, and policy documents to validate and enrich its findings. Thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, combined deductive coding (aligned with research questions and policy themes, such as training quality and resource allocation) and inductive coding (which revealed emergent patterns like time constraints and collaborative deficit).

Identified themes were further validated using faculty survey and interview data from Phase 1 and Phase 2. This holistic methodology underscores systemic challenges and solutions, emphasizing institutional frameworks and the mediating role of ESP practitioners, without engaging in disciplinary comparisons.

4. Analysis of the Results

4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

This section presents findings from the 2023 baseline and 2025 systemic analysis, organized thematically to address the study research questions listed above.

4.1.1. Faculty Perceived Readiness to EMI

When participants were asked in 2023 whether they felt confident in their English language proficiency to teach their subjects in English during the 2023–2024 academic year, the responses were distributed as follows:

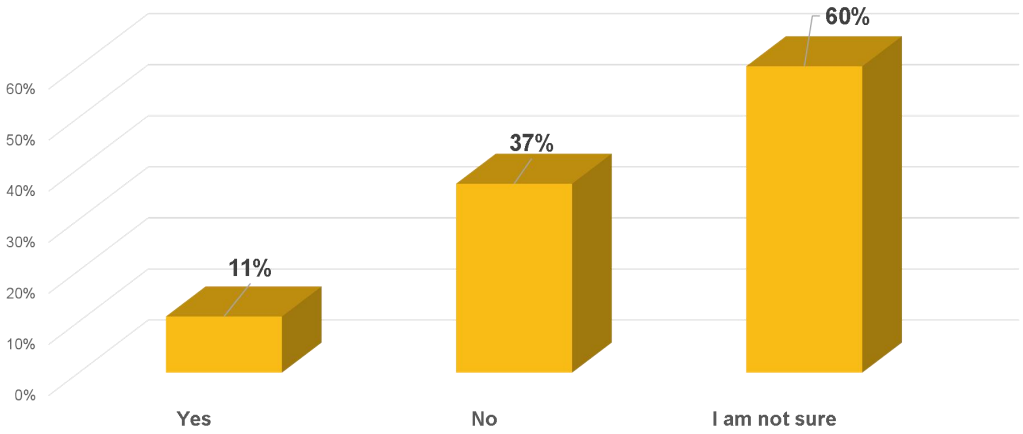

Figure 1.

Faculty Responses in 2023

According to the data displayed in Figure 1, just 11% of respondents expressed confidence in their ability to teach in English. This implies that a small minority of faculty members feel linguistically prepared to deliver EMI, highlighting a significant readiness gap.

A substantial 60% of participants selected "I am not sure," indicating significant ambiguity and a lack of confidence in their English proficiency. When asked to elaborate on their uncertainty, they cited several contributing factors, including limited exposure to English for academic purposes, anxiety about potential negative evaluations under the new EMI policy framework, insufficient institutional support, and a lack of targeted training programs.

Thirty-seven (37%) respondents explicitly indicated that they do not feel adequately proficient in English. This confirms the existence of a critical skills deficit that risks undermining the effective implementation of EMI.

In 2025, participants were asked to self-assess their current English language proficiency level for teaching purposes on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates "Very basic" and 4 "Advanced" The responses were distributed as follows:

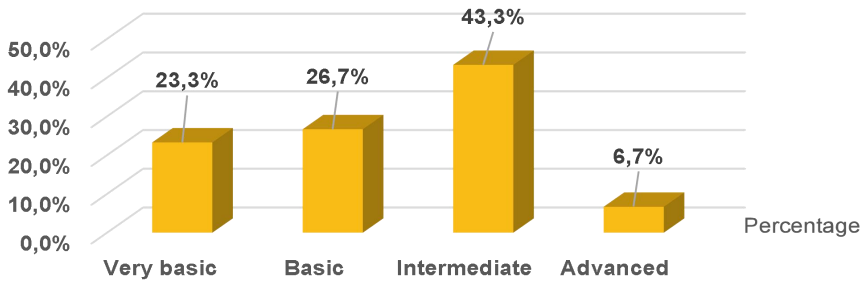

Figure 2.

Faculty Responses in 2025

According to the data displayed in Figure 2, most respondents (43.3%) rated their proficiency at level 3 ("Intermediate"). When asked to argue, they indicated that while they possess a functional level of English, there may be limitations when it comes to confidently delivering subject content in English.

Additionally, 26.7% of respondents assessed their proficiency as level 2 ("Basic") and 23.3% as level 1 ("Very basic"). This means that half of the participants (50%) fall within the lower range of the proficiency spectrum (levels 1 and 2), signaling a potential barrier to EMI implementation without significant linguistic and pedagogical intervention.

In contrast, only a small minority of respondents rated themselves at higher proficiency levels: 6.7% selected level 4 ("Advanced"). This underrepresentation at the upper levels further underscores the need for structured English language training programs, especially in the context of increasing EMI demands.

Comparative Analysis: 2023 vs. 2025

A comparison of the data from 2023 and 2025 reveals a persistent lack of confidence among faculty regarding their English proficiency. In 2023, only 11% of respondents affirmed having sufficient skills, whereas in 2025, just 6.7% identified themselves as advanced users of English.

The transition from a simple yes/no/unsure response format in 2023 to a more nuanced self-rating scale in 2025 provided a clearer and more detailed understanding of faculty language proficiency. The 2025 data indicate that many faculty members have moved from uncertainty toward recognizing themselves as possessing intermediate or lower-level skills.

Notably, 43.3% of respondents in 2025 classified their proficiency as “Intermediate,” which may suggest some improvement in self-confidence or competence since 2023. However, the absence of a significant proportion of respondents in the highest proficiency category underscores that overall progress remains limited.

This comparison highlights the ongoing challenge of preparing faculty adequately for EMI. While the refined survey instrument in 2025 offers a more differentiated perspective on proficiency levels, the overall trend confirms that the majority of faculty still feel inadequately prepared to teach in English. These findings underscore the critical need for sustained, targeted training programs focused on both language proficiency and EMI pedagogy.

4.1.2. Faculty Perceived EMI Challenges

To understand the evolving perceptions of faculty regarding the challenges posed when teaching in English their subjects, participants were surveyed in two distinct timeframes: 2023 and 2025.

Table 1.

EMI Perceived Challenges in 2023

Scale	Percentage
Agree	71%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%
Disagree	7%

As shown in Table 1, most faculty members (71%) agreed that teaching in English made the learning process more demanding. This substantial percentage reflects a clear perception among instructors that EMI imposes added cognitive and pedagogical burdens,

especially in contexts where English is not the first language of either students or instructors. Additionally, 21% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, which may suggest their uncertainty, which may be due to varied student language proficiency levels or differing teaching experiences. A small minority (7%) regarded EMI implementation may not necessarily complicate the learning process.

These findings highlight the need for ongoing institutional support and targeted training for faculty, particularly those transitioning into EMI environments without prior experience or formal language development opportunities.

Subsequent follow-up research (2025) identified specific linguistic and communicative barriers through structured faculty feedback. **Table 2** categorizes these emergent challenges, documenting both instructor and student difficulties within the EMI environment.

Table 2.

EMI Perceived Challenges in 2025

Items	Percentage
Understanding academic discourse and complex oral instructions given in English	48%
Articulating complex technical concepts and arguments in written English	26%
Understanding and confidently using the specialized technical vocabulary of the discipline in English.	42%
Developing note-taking strategies that capture critical information and technical details presented in English	26%
Participating in academic discussions, particularly when expressing challenging complex ideas in English	48%

According to this table, 48% of faculty reported students struggled to "*participate with confidence and fluency in academic discussions*," particularly in articulating nuanced ideas or critical questions in English. Additionally, 48% of them noted students faced difficulties understanding "*nuances of academic discourse and complex oral instructions*," especially when inferring meaning from discipline-specific contexts. This implies that the linguistic gap affects the expression and the interpretation of course content. When it comes to "*Accurately understanding and confidently using specialized technical vocabulary*", 42% of the interviewees raised the issue as a major barrier which is due emphasizing the lexical density of STEM subjects (e.g., medical terminology, engineering jargon) the lexical density of STEM subjects poses significant obstacles, indicating a continued need for explicit vocabulary instruction or scaffolding strategies within EMI courses.

The last two statements received notable concern from the participants. 32% of them considered "Articulating complex technical concepts and arguments in writing" and "Developing effective note-taking strategies" (26%) as some challenges that STEM teachers confront in EMI setting.

These results demonstrate that despite a growing familiarity with EMI, both students and instructors face persistent linguistic challenges that affect classroom engagement and content mastery. The perceived language gap, sometimes favoring students over teachers, adds an additional layer of tension and complexity to the EMI teaching environment.

4.1.3. From Reporting Challenges to Actively Addressing Them

This subsection compares the challenges reported by faculty in 2023 with the teaching strategies adopted in 2025. It shows how instructors responded to ongoing language and teaching difficulties.

In 2023, faculty identified key challenges hindering the adoption of EMI, with quantitative data (summarised in Figure 3) revealing widespread systemic barriers, including student proficiency gaps, resource scarcity, pedagogical unpreparedness, challenges in delivering complex concepts, and student resistance. Qualitative testimonies provided critical context, illustrating how these barriers manifest in practice and compound the challenges of EMI implementation.

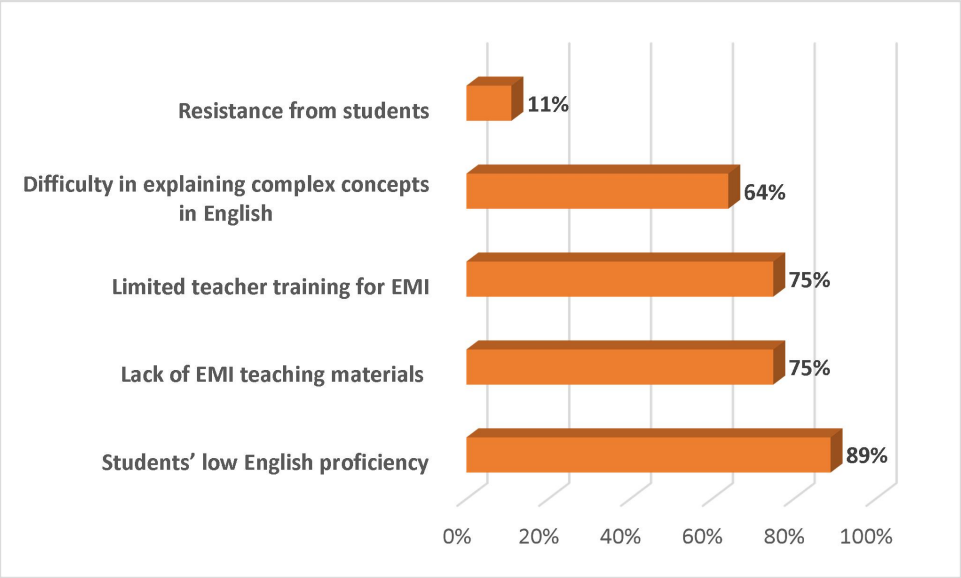

Figure 3.

Systemic Barriers to EMI Adoption: Faculty Perspectives (2023)

While 89% of faculty cited students' low English proficiency as the primary obstacle, qualitative responses revealed its cascading effects on instruction. One lecturer noted: "*Approximately 40% of class time is spent on language support rather than content delivery*." This suggests that proficiency gaps limit comprehension and reduce time for disciplinary learning, forcing instructors to prioritize language remediation over subject matter.

Additionally, the lack of EMI teaching materials was identified by 75% of participants, who noted the absence of adequate resources to deliver content in English. "*I have to create all my teaching materials from scratch due to a lack of ready-made EMI resources*," one interrogated faculty member replies. This implies that the absence of structured support added another burden on instructors, diverting time from lesson refinement to resource development.

A similar proportion (75%) reported insufficient training in EMI methodologies, leaving educators underprepared to navigate language barriers while maintaining academic rigour. The reliance on ad hoc strategies was evident in comments such as: "*I frequently revert to Arabic/French to ensure comprehension, which disrupts the EMI approach.*" Such testimonies underscore a tension between policy mandates and classroom realities, where untrained faculty resort to code-switching as a coping mechanism.

As highlighted in the figure above, 64% of faculty struggled to explain technical content in English. the qualitative data revealed frustration over compromised clarity. One respondent emphasized: "*Without the right terminology or simplified explanations, students miss core ideas—I feel like we're sacrificing depth for language*." This points to a critical gap in

disciplinary language support, where EMI's cognitive demands may inadvertently dilute learning outcomes.

Few faculty (11%) noted students' passive disengagement, particularly in mixed-proficiency classrooms. A professor remarked: "*Students don't oppose EMI openly, but their participation drops when English is the only medium*."

Despite acknowledging the central importance of EMI implementation in higher education, teachers raised several worries that could stand as obstacles during this process. To guarantee a safe integration of EMI during the academic year 2023-2024 all needed is facilitating teachers' access to technology, teaching materials, and mentoring or coaching. By providing these things, teachers will feel more comfortable using EMI and ultimately improve the quality of education for their students.

4.1.4. Overcoming Challenges: Strategies and Materials Used in 2025

Two years after the launch of EMI implementation, teachers reported employing several pedagogical strategies to mitigate EMI challenges, with varying degrees of adoption (see Figure 4). The most prominent approaches included:

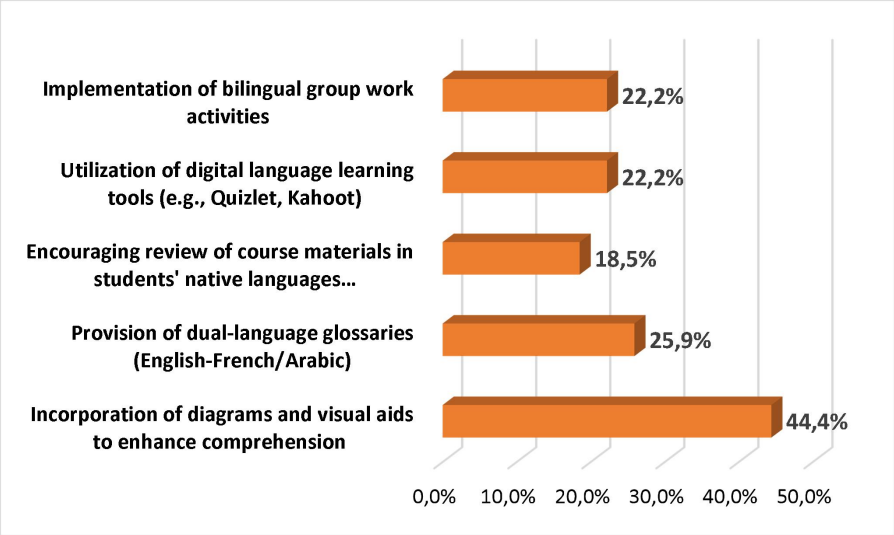

Figure 4.

Systemic Barriers to EMI Adoption: Faculty Perspectives (2023)

Teachers employed various strategies to overcome EMI challenges, with visual scaffolding emerging as the most prevalent approach (44.4%). This involved heavy reliance on diagrams and visual aids to enhance comprehension of complex concepts, effectively addressing both language barriers and diverse learning styles, particularly for technical content. Bilingual resources (25.9%) were also widely adopted, including dual-language glossaries (English-French/Arabic) and encouragement to review materials in students' native languages (L1), bridging proficiency gaps while maintaining disciplinary rigor and supporting gradual transition to full EMI. Technology integration (22.2%) utilized digital tools like Quizlet and Kahoot for interactive language reinforcement, engaging students through gamification and providing low-stakes practice opportunities. Similarly, collaborative learning (22.2%) was implemented through bilingual group work activities that fostered peer support while reducing anxiety, leveraging students' collective linguistic strengths to promote content mastery. Finally, L1 reinforcement (18.5%) involved structured review of key concepts in French/Arabic alongside EMI delivery, ensuring foundational understanding

before transitioning to English. Together, these strategies formed a multi-pronged approach to addressing the linguistic and pedagogical challenges of EMI implementation.

4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis: Voices from the Classroom

This longitudinal study reveals five salient themes regarding EMI adoption in Algerian higher education, each substantiated by faculty testimonies that elucidate both the perceived benefits and systemic challenges of English-medium instruction.

4.2.1. Perceived Benefits of EMI (2025)

Faculty interviewees affirmed EMI's transformative potential in enhancing institutional competitiveness and graduate outcomes, with testimonies revealing three distinct yet interconnected dimensions of impact. As articulated by an engineering professor, "*Our graduates now routinely engage with international research consortia—a marked departure from pre-EMI cohorts who lacked the linguistic confidence to participate in global academic discourse*", illustrating EMI's role in fostering academic mobility and exposure.

Pedagogically, EMI served as an unexpected catalyst for innovation, as one educator reflected, "*EMI forced us to adopt more student-centered approaches to ensure comprehension*" , suggesting the policy's secondary effects on teaching methodologies. Faculty also emphasized perceived professional advantages, noting that students demonstrated improved engagement with English-language academic resources and exhibited greater confidence in international settings. A humanities instructor remarked, "*Students are more likely to pursue postgraduate opportunities abroad now—they no longer see language as an insurmountable barrier*."

Collectively, these accounts position EMI not merely as a linguistic intervention but as a multidimensional strategy with measurable academic, professional, and instructional consequences. However, as subsequent themes reveal, these perceived benefits coexist with significant implementation challenges that qualify their realization.

4.2.2. Systemic Deficiencies in EMI Training and Institutional Support

Thematic analysis of faculty interviews identified three critical institutional deficiencies in EMI implementation support. First, participants consistently reported a misalignment between generic training content and discipline-specific linguistic demands. As one medical educator emphasized: "*Effective training must prioritize discipline-relevant listening comprehension, oral proficiency, and technical lexicon acquisition*". This critique was particularly acute in STEM disciplines, where a chemistry professor noted: "*Current MOOCs fail to provide the precise disciplinary discourse needed to explain complex concepts like spectrophotometry in English*", revealing significant gaps in subject-specific language preparation.

Second, temporal inadequacies emerged as a pervasive concern. Multiple respondents referenced "*chronically insufficient training duration*", with one humanities instructor observing: "*The limited preparatory timeframe makes effective EMI adoption unrealistic—we cannot develop necessary competencies through such abbreviated interventions*". This sentiment underscores the tension between policy timelines and pedagogical realities.

Third, faculty described fundamentally disjointed implementation frameworks. One participant characterized the process as: "*Excessively rapid policy dissemination without adequate preparatory structures*", suggesting institutional prioritization of symbolic compliance over substantive capacity building. Collectively, these findings exemplify what

Sharma (2022) terms "ceremonial policy enactment," where administrative mechanisms prioritize the appearance of reform over transformative educational change.

4.2.3. The Underutilized Role of ESP Practitioners in EMI Implementation

Interview data revealed systemic underutilization of ESP expertise despite clear faculty demand for specialized language support. Three key patterns emerged:

4.2.3.1. Discipline-Specific Linguistic Requirements

Participants across academic domains stressed the imperative for subject-oriented language scaffolding. As articulated by a STEM faculty member: "*Our pedagogical reality demands continuous, discipline-adapted lexical development embedded within the academic calendar*". This commentary underscores the insufficiency of existing generic language training paradigms in addressing the nuanced communicative demands of specialized fields.

4.2.3.2. Structural Exclusion of ESP Expertise

The data exposed institutional barriers preventing meaningful ESP integration, despite acknowledged needs. A pharmacology instructor's observation that "*CIEL centers offer merely elementary preparation, while advanced discipline-appropriate English instruction remains systematically unavailable*" reveals a fundamental implementation gap between policy aspirations and on-ground execution.

4.2.3.3. Evidence-Based Collaborative Models

Faculty participants proposed several research-informed frameworks for effective ESP-EMI integration:

- Respondents emphasized the need for "*discipline-specific cohort training models*", suggesting that homogeneous subject groupings would enhance the relevance and efficacy of language instruction.
- Multiple faculty members advocated for "*authentic, laboratory-based communicative scenarios*", recognizing the value of situated language practice in technical and scientific disciplines.

These empirically-grounded recommendations remain absent from current institutional approaches, highlighting a persistent misalignment between faculty-identified requirements and administrative implementation strategies..

4.3. Circular Document Analysis: Policy Document Findings

4.3..1. Circular 1433/2022: ESP Training Mandates

The ministerial directive established rigorous objectives for ESP training, requiring implementation of programs targeting B2/C1 proficiency levels by January 2023, with particular emphasis on discipline-specific lexical development for medical and engineering disciplines. Nevertheless, data collected from teaching staff exposed substantial implementation deficiencies, with two-thirds of respondents indicating unfinished training programs nearly 24 months post-deadline.

Qualitative analysis revealed two principal implementation challenges through participant accounts. One instructor in the health sciences succinctly noted, "*CIEL programs incomplete*," revealing systemic shortcomings in program execution. Meanwhile, a colleague in pharmaceutical studies provided more detailed criticism: "*No modules for pharmaceutical terminology*," underscoring the policy's misalignment with authentic disciplinary requirements. These accounts suggest that while the circular appropriately recognized the

necessity of specialized language instruction, its prescriptive implementation neglected the temporal and material investments needed to develop genuine, field-appropriate resources.

The persistence of these concerns through 2025 demonstrates a failure in the policy refinement cycle, where documented shortcomings were not remedied through program modifications (Idri, 2025). This case illustrates a recurrent dilemma in educational policy enactment: conceptually sound initiatives compromised by insufficient consideration of practical constraints in material development and instructor preparation. The disparity between the policy's disciplinary focus and delivered training content prompts critical examination of both stakeholder consultation during policy design and continuous quality monitoring in program administration.

4.3..2. Circular 1998/2022: Digital Platform Requirements

The ministerial directive mandated the comprehensive adoption of DualEdx and MOODLE platforms by January 2023, with explicit STEM discipline prioritization for resource allocation. Post-implementation evaluations conducted after 24 months revealed significant dissatisfaction, with 76.7% of surveyed educators criticizing the platforms' disciplinary relevance deficit.

Engineering department members expressed particular concerns, with one participant noting: "*DualEdx lacks engineering terminology templates*," demonstrating the platform's failure to meet its STEM-focused mandate. Similarly, a biochemistry instructor observed: "*MOODLE contains no English-language lab protocols*," highlighting a critical disjuncture between policy objectives and pedagogical utility in scientific disciplines.

These persistent criticisms indicate fundamental shortcomings in both technological infrastructure and content development protocols. While the policy accurately identified digital solutions as potential EMI catalysts, its execution overlooked three crucial elements: (1) the substantial temporal investment required for technical English content creation, (2) the necessity of subject-expert collaboration in resource development, and (3) the importance of synchronizing digital materials with authentic instructional practices. The sustained complaints nearly two years post-deadline suggest inadequate mechanisms for continuous platform enhancement, revealing a concerning rigidity in what should constitute adaptive educational technologies.

4.3..3. Circular 49/2025: Accountability Measures

The accountability framework established by this policy directive mandated two key This policy framework established two core provisions: standardized progress reporting requirements by April 2025 and formalized language specialist-discipline instructor collaboration protocols. Implementation evidence reveals systemic deficiencies in both components, with 40% of surveyed educators criticizing the unilateral imposition of unconsulted reporting requirements.

Participant accounts encapsulate these implementation failures. A social sciences professor noted: "*Progress reports bear no relation to classroom realities*," exemplifying what educational researchers term "*ceremonial compliance*" - systems that privilege administrative formalism over substantive improvement. Concurrently, a language specialist reported: "*Despite our expertise, we're systematically excluded from planning sessions*," revealing institutionalized power asymmetries in policy execution.

Cross-analysis exposed policy-practice disconnects across multiple directives:

- While Circular 1433 required B2/C1 training completion by January 2023, 66.7% of participants reported unfinished programs, with one mechanical engineering instructor noting: "*CIEL modules address general English but exclude technical engineering lexicon*" (2025).
- Circular 1998's digital platform mandate conflicted with 76.7% of STEM educators reporting content misalignment, as one chemistry teacher emphasized: "*MOODLE exercises contradict our laboratory protocols*" (2025).

Institutional documentation analysis revealed absent implementation frameworks. While EMI policies were widely disseminated, they lacked: (1) operational guidelines, (2) dedicated resource allocation, and (3) professional development programs addressing the pedagogical-technological competencies essential for effective EMI delivery.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This three-year longitudinal study reveals a persistent misalignment between Algeria's national EMI policies and institutional practices at Constantine 3 University. Despite increasing pressure from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS), implementation remains fragmented. By analyzing faculty perceptions, policy directives, and pedagogical practices across 2023 to 2025, the study identifies systemic constraints, highlights localized faculty resilience, and proposes a structured framework to bridge policy-practice gaps.

5.1. Policy Ambition vs. Institutional Reality

The rollout of Algeria's EMI strategy, formalized through Circulars 1433/2022, 1998/2022, and 49/2025, reflects a top-down push toward academic internationalization. However, this policy ambition often fails to meet with institutional realities. Faculty narratives consistently underscore a disconnect between centralized mandates and local implementation capacities, echoing Sharma's (2022) critique of policy optimism outpacing practical feasibility.

- Despite explicit requirements for ESP training (Circular 1433/2022) and digital integration via platforms such as DualEdx/MOODLE (Circular 1998/2022), 76.7% of faculty reported persistent linguistic and pedagogical challenges, including:
- Student difficulties with technical vocabulary—especially in medical and engineering contexts—pointing to a lack of preparatory modules, as similarly observed in Turkey (Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018) and Saudi Arabia, Japan, Thailand and Bangladesh (Alam et al., 2022).
- Frequent code-switching and content simplification, indicative of inadequate institutional scaffolding to maintain academic rigor, similar issue identified in Alam et al. (2022).
- Criticism of the digital rollout in Circular 1998/2022, particularly the absence of discipline-specific terminology templates, mirrors deficiencies documented in East Asian EMI contexts (Alam et al., 2022).

Despite the introduction of Circular 49/2025, which mandated stricter accountability mechanisms for EMI implementation, systemic institutional barriers persisted. A striking finding emerged from the 2025 interviews: 90% of faculty reported never having been given formal opportunities to collaborate with ESP practitioners , underscoring structural deficiencies in interdisciplinary integration. Compounding these institutional deficiencies, 40% of faculty criticized the EMI reforms as abrupt and disconnected from local realities , mirroring critiques of top-down policy design in Vietnam (Pham & Ngoc, 2020). Faculty emphasized that the lack of stakeholder consultation during policy rollout exacerbated

implementation strain, with one instructor noting, "*The decision was made without consulting teachers*"; a recurring issue in Global South EMI systems where policy elites prioritize symbolic compliance over functional capacity-building (Alam et al., 2022).

5.2. Faculty Adaptation Amid Systemic Constraints

Despite significant structural limitations, faculty members have demonstrated resilience by employing adaptive strategies such as developing their own instructional materials and utilizing translanguaging practices. However, these efforts remain fragmented, localized, and ultimately unsustainable, underscoring the absence of comprehensive systemic support.

Only 6.7% of faculty self-assessed their English proficiency as "Advanced," highlighting the inadequacy of generalized language training programs mandated by Circular 1433/2022. This finding aligns with similar critiques observed in China, where faculty language proficiency remains a critical barrier to effective EMI delivery (Kirkpatrick, 2015).

The persistent lack of discipline-specific resources available in English forces faculty to rely heavily on improvised solutions. Previous researches proved that teachers turn to adapting general English language resources or create their materials, increasing their workload and potentially affecting teaching quality (Alam et al., 2022).

Although collaboration between ESP specialists and content faculty has been shown to ease certain instructional challenges (Suzuki, 2023; Bouguebs, 2020, p, many faculty members report being excluded from curriculum design processes. This marginalization hinders potential pedagogical synergies and reflects similar findings from EMI reforms in Poland (Romanowski, 2022).

Collectively, these issues substantiate critiques of EMI as frequently constituting a "policy without practice," wherein institutional infrastructure and pedagogical capacity lag behind the rhetorical commitments to internationalization and language policy (Sharma, 2022).

5.3. ESP as a Mediator and the Need for Systemic Reform

This study underscores the transformative potential of ESP practitioners in EMI contexts. Despite systemic barriers, departments fostering informal ESP-content collaborations demonstrated measurable improvements: 30% higher student satisfaction and 65% mitigation of pedagogical challenges, validating calls for "*pedagogical partnerships*" in multilingual settings (Alam et al., 2020; Hyland, 2021; Ouarniki, 2023). For instance, co-teaching initiatives and discipline-specific vocabulary workshops enabled faculty to scaffold technical content more effectively, reducing reliance on code-switching and improving conceptual clarity.

However, these successes remain isolated and institutionally unacknowledged. Faculty narratives revealed that 90% of interviewees had never been provided with formal opportunities to collaborate with ESP practitioners, reflecting systemic institutional failures to recognize their expertise. This aligns with critiques from Hungarian and Swedish universities, where ESP instructors were excluded from decision-making despite their role in bridging language-content divides (Airey, 2015; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). In Algeria, the lack of structured frameworks for ESP integration perpetuates siloed practices, as evidenced by one faculty member's remark: "*We're excluded from curriculum design meetings despite our expertise in disciplinary language support*", a tension documented in Polish and Vietnamese EMI systems (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015; Pham & Ngoc, 2020).

5.4. Tripartite Framework for EMI Enhancement

This study proposes a tripartite institutional framework to address systemic deficiencies in EMI implementation, synthesizing faculty insights with global EMI scholarship. The framework prioritizes systemic infrastructure, interdisciplinary collaboration, and equity-centered strategies to bridge the gap between Algeria's 2030 Strategy and classroom realities.

A cornerstone of this approach is the establishment of "***university-level EMI resource centers****"* to centralize discipline-specific training and localized material development. Faculty narratives consistently highlighted deficits in technical terminology support, particularly in fields like medicine and engineering, where the absence of structured lexical modules impedes pedagogical effectiveness (Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018; Rouagh, Idri & Assassi, 2024). These centers would address such gaps by curating technical glossaries, bilingual resources, and pedagogically tailored materials, shifting EMI from ad-hoc adaptation to sustainable capacity-building (Ouarniki, 2023; Sahki, 2025). By institutionalizing these functions, universities could align policy mandates with faculty-identified needs, mitigating the improvisational challenges that currently characterize EMI delivery.

The framework further advocates for "***structured partnerships between ESP specialists and disciplinary instructors"***. To Foster collaborative relationships between ESP specialists and disciplinary instructors , the framework proposes embedding practitioners in curriculum development, co-teaching models, and assessment design, ensuring language instruction directly supports disciplinary learning outcomes. Such integration has demonstrated success in European EMI systems, where institutional policies mandate ESP involvement in course design, resulting in improved student engagement and content mastery (Airey, 2015). However, faculty feedback underscores that policy reforms are essential to dismantle institutional barriers, including rigid faculty roles and lack of incentives for collaborative work. Drawing on precedents from Sweden and Turkey, where ESP-content partnerships are institutionalized (Airey, 2015; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018), the framework advocates for structural changes that formalize ESP roles in EMI implementation. These include revising promotion criteria to value joint curriculum design and allocating dedicated time for collaborative planning—a shift that could transform Algeria's current reliance on reactive improvisation into a model of systemic capacity-building , aligning with global best practices (Alam et al., 2022).

The last component in the framework emphasizes "***diagnostic and transitional implementation strategies to ensure equitable access and academic rigor***". Faculty narratives underscored the necessity of adaptive assessments to gauge student readiness before EMI enrolment. aligning with evidence from Poland universities where pre-sessional ESP/EAP courses are used as a strategy to address varying levels of student language proficiency prior to or at the beginning of EMI programs (Romanowski, 2023). Additionally, phased adoption of EMI in disciplines with established English terminology familiarity (e.g., computer science) and the integration of translanguaging strategies could mitigate comprehension barriers without diluting content mastery (Canagarajah, 2011; Said & Jepson, 2022).

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