

Received date: 29.09.2024

Accepted date: 05.11.2024

Publication date: 24.12.2024



Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems

International Academic Journal

ISSN : 2790-0169 ; E-ISSN 2790-0177 ; OCLC Number 1322801874

Assessing the Implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction in Political Science and Law Faculties: Challenges, Perceptions, and Institutional Readiness at Setif2 University¹

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Abstract. The recent ministerial decree on integrating English into higher education has raised important questions about its implementation in various disciplines, including Political Science. This study investigates the extent to which English is currently used in teaching Political Science at Setif University, examining faculty perspectives, challenges, and institutional support. Through a structured questionnaire distributed to Political Science instructors, the research aims to assess their preparedness, the obstacles they face, and their attitudes toward the transition. The findings will provide insights into the feasibility of adopting English as a medium of instruction and offer recommendations for enhancing language support and policy implementation.

Keywords: English medium instruction, Political Science education, language policy, higher education reform, faculty perspectives, Setif2 University.

I. Introduction

In recent years, the role of English in higher education has become increasingly significant worldwide. As the language of international communication, academic research, and diplomacy, English has positioned itself as an essential tool for knowledge dissemination and professional development.

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Many non-English-speaking countries, including Algeria, have recognized the necessity of incorporating English into their education systems to ensure global competitiveness.

The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education has recently issued a decree emphasizing the gradual integration of English as a medium of instruction in various disciplines. While this policy aims to modernize the Algerian university system and enhance students' access to global knowledge, its implementation presents several challenges, particularly in disciplines traditionally taught in Arabic or French. Political Science, a field deeply connected to international affairs, governance, and law, is one such discipline where the shift to English is expected to have both advantages and obstacles.

The importance of English in Political Science education cannot be overstated. Most scholarly publications, international conferences, and diplomatic communications are conducted in English, making proficiency in the language crucial for students and faculty alike. The transition to English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Political Science could offer Algerian students greater access to international research, facilitate academic collaborations, and improve their career prospects. However, the success of this transition depends on several factors, including faculty preparedness, institutional support, and student adaptability. While some instructors may already possess sufficient English proficiency to conduct their courses in English, others may face difficulties due to linguistic barriers, lack of training, or the unavailability of adequate teaching materials. Furthermore, students' ability to comprehend and engage with course content in English remains an important consideration.

Despite the government's encouragement, the actual implementation of English in Political Science courses at Algerian universities remains unclear. At Setif University, for example, it is uncertain whether instructors have begun incorporating English into their teaching or if they continue to rely primarily on Arabic or French. Additionally, little is known about the perspectives of Political Science faculty members regarding this transition. Are they willing and prepared to teach in English? What obstacles do they encounter in doing so? Do they receive any institutional support, such as language training programs or English-language teaching materials? These are critical questions that need to be addressed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ministerial decree and the feasibility of its implementation.

Given these considerations, this study aims to investigate the extent to which English is being implemented in Political Science teaching at Setif University. It seeks to explore instructors' perspectives, the challenges they face, and the support they require to facilitate this transition. By conducting a comprehensive analysis through a structured questionnaire, this research will provide valuable insights into the current situation and offer recommendations for a more effective integration of English into Political Science education. Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute to the broader discourse on language policy in Algerian higher education and to assist decision-makers in designing strategies that support both educators and students in adapting to this new linguistic shift.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of English as a medium of instruction in Algerian universities has been a subject of considerable debate and uncertainty. Although the ministerial decree mandates a gradual shift towards English, the actual extent of its application in different disciplines remains unclear. In Political Science, a field that heavily relies on international literature and global political discourse, the integration of English is particularly crucial. However, the readinesses of faculty members to adopt this change and the challenges they encounter in doing so have not been thoroughly examined.

One major issue is the linguistic preparedness of instructors. While some faculty members may have sufficient English proficiency, others may struggle with language barriers, making it difficult to deliver complex political concepts effectively. Moreover, the availability of teaching resources in English is another significant concern. Without adequate textbooks, research materials, and institutional training, transitioning to EMI becomes more challenging. Additionally, students' ability to engage with Political Science content in English varies, raising concerns about their comprehension and academic performance.

Furthermore, the lack of clear guidelines and institutional support for the transition to English creates further difficulties for faculty members. Are there structured training programs in place to assist instructors in improving their English proficiency? Are there official policies at Setif University that facilitate the transition to EMI? Addressing these questions is essential to understanding the obstacles faced by Political Science instructors and identifying practical solutions to support them.

This study aims to examine these challenges by assessing the extent to which English is currently used in Political Science courses at Setif University, exploring faculty members' attitudes toward EMI, and identifying the key difficulties they face. The findings will contribute to a clearer understanding of the implementation process and offer recommendations for policy improvements to enhance the effectiveness of English integration in higher education.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is English currently used in teaching Political Science at Setif University?
2. What are the main challenges faced by Political Science instructors in implementing English in their teaching?
3. How do Political Science instructors perceive the transition to English in their field?
4. What institutional support is available to facilitate the use of English in Political Science courses?
5. What strategies can be proposed to improve the implementation of English in Political Science education at Setif University?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the study is guided by the following hypotheses:

1. English is not yet fully implemented in Political Science courses at Setif University due to various linguistic and institutional barriers.

2. Political Science instructors face significant challenges in teaching in English, including limited language proficiency, lack of instructional materials, and insufficient institutional support.

3. Faculty members hold mixed views regarding the transition to English, with some seeing it as beneficial while others perceive it as an additional burden.

4. Institutional policies and training programs for Political Science instructors are insufficient to support the transition to English.

5. Providing language training, instructional materials, and institutional support can facilitate the adoption of English in Political Science education.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the extent to which English is currently used in Political Science courses at Setif University.
2. To identify the main challenges Political Science instructors face in implementing English.
3. To explore faculty members' perceptions of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Political Science.
4. To examine the availability of institutional support for the transition to English.
5. To propose practical recommendations to enhance the implementation of English in Political Science education.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research hold significant implications for multiple stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and students.

- **For Political Science Instructors:** This study will highlight the challenges they face in transitioning to English, providing them with insights into possible solutions and institutional support needed.
- **For University Administrators:** The study will offer valuable data on the readiness of faculty members for EMI, allowing for better planning and resource allocation to facilitate the transition.
- **For Students:** Understanding the implementation of English in Political Science courses will help students prepare for EMI and adapt to new learning methods.
- **For Policymakers:** The research findings will provide evidence-based recommendations to guide future policies on English integration in higher education, ensuring a smoother transition for universities across Algeria.
- **For Researchers:** This study will contribute to the academic discourse on language policy and EMI in Algerian universities, serving as a reference for future investigations on similar topics.

II. Theoretical Part

The integration of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in universities worldwide has been a subject of extensive research, reflecting both the opportunities and challenges associated with this educational shift. A comprehensive study by Ernesto Macaro, Samantha Curle, Jack Pun, Jiangshan An, and

Julie Dearden (2018) systematically reviewed EMI in higher education, highlighting its rapid expansion and the varying degrees of effectiveness across different contexts. Their findings suggest that while EMI can enhance English proficiency among students, it may also pose challenges to content comprehension if not implemented with adequate support mechanisms.

In the European context, Bernd Wächter and Friedhelm Maiworm's (2014) research provides a detailed analysis of English-taught programs across the continent. They observed a significant increase in such programs, particularly in countries like the Netherlands, where the number of English-taught courses reached 1,078 in 2014. However, they also noted that despite this growth, less than 2% of students were enrolled in these programs, indicating potential accessibility and acceptance issues.

Anna Kristina Hultgren (2014) examined the correlation between the use of English and the world rankings of Northern European universities. Her study found that while Englishization is often associated with internationalization and improved rankings, it also raises concerns about the marginalization of local languages and cultural identities within academic settings.

In Asia, the adoption of EMI has been met with both enthusiasm and challenges. Jinhyun Cho (2012) investigated the experiences of Korean students subjected to English-medium lectures. The study revealed that while some students appreciated the opportunity to improve their English skills, many struggled with comprehension and felt that their overall learning experience was compromised.

The perspectives of educators are crucial in the successful implementation of EMI. Ernesto Macaro and Julie Dearden (2016) conducted a comparative study across three countries, exploring higher education teachers' attitudes towards EMI. They discovered that while some educators were supportive, others expressed concerns about their own English proficiency and the potential impact on teaching quality.

Lastly, Ruth Breeze's (2016) guide for non-native speakers teaching EMI courses in higher education offers practical insights and strategies. Breeze emphasizes the importance of specialized training and resources to equip educators with the necessary skills to effectively deliver content in English, thereby ensuring that both language and subject matter are adequately addressed.

Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted nature of implementing English as a medium of instruction in universities. They highlight the need for careful planning, support for both students and educators, and a balanced approach that considers linguistic, cultural, and educational factors to ensure the successful integration of EMI in higher education institutions.

III. Methodology

1. Research Context

This study is conducted within the framework of the Algerian higher education system, specifically focusing on the implementation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Political Science and Law faculties. The context of the research is Setif2 University, where recent ministerial policies have encouraged the integration of English into higher education. While some faculties have started adopting

EMI, others still primarily rely on Arabic and French. This study seeks to assess how English is being implemented in the teaching of Political Science and Law, particularly through the perspectives of faculty members who are directly involved in the teaching process.

Setif2 University serves as an important site for this investigation, as it represents a typical Algerian institution that is adapting to global educational trends. The university's efforts to integrate English into its curriculum are part of a broader national initiative to enhance students' academic and professional opportunities. However, the extent to which this policy has been successfully implemented, as well as the challenges faced by educators, remain largely unexplored.

2. Research Design

This study adopts a **descriptive research design**, which is suitable for assessing current practices, attitudes, and challenges regarding the use of English in Political Science and Law faculties. The research follows a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

A **questionnaire** serves as the primary data collection tool, allowing researchers to gather structured responses from faculty members. The study aims to quantify the level of English usage in teaching while also exploring instructors' opinions and experiences through open-ended questions. This mixed approach ensures that the study captures not only statistical data but also the underlying reasons and perspectives related to EMI implementation.

3. Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consists of **45 university teachers** specializing in Political Science and Law at Setif2 University. These educators have varying levels of experience and proficiency in English, making them an ideal group for assessing the implementation of EMI.

Since surveying all 45 faculty members may not be feasible, the study employs **purposive sampling** to select a representative subset. A sample of **12 university teachers** from the Political Science and Law departments at Setif2 University is chosen based on their direct involvement in teaching and their potential exposure to EMI policies. This sample size is sufficient to capture a range of perspectives while maintaining focus on the key objectives of the research.

4. Research Tool: The Questionnaire

A **questionnaire** is the primary data collection instrument for this study. A questionnaire is a structured set of written questions designed to collect specific information from respondents. It is one of the most widely used research tools in social sciences because it allows for standardized data collection, ensuring consistency and comparability across responses.

4.1. Definition of a Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a **research instrument** composed of a series of questions used to gather information from respondents systematically. It can include **closed-ended questions** (which provide predefined answer choices) and **open-ended questions** (which allow participants to express their views

in their own words). Questionnaires are particularly useful in survey-based research as they enable researchers to collect data from a large number of participants efficiently.

4.2. Commentary on the Questionnaire of This Study

The questionnaire designed for this study consists of **three sections**:

1. **General Information** – This section collects demographic data about the respondents, such as their academic background, years of teaching experience, and level of English proficiency.

2. **English in Teaching** – This section includes questions about the extent to which English is used in teaching Political Science and Law courses, the frequency of its use, and the challenges faced by instructors.

3. **Perceptions and Challenges** – This section explores faculty members' opinions on EMI, their level of preparedness, institutional support available, and recommendations for improving English integration in higher education.

The questionnaire is designed to balance **quantitative data collection** (e.g., Likert scale questions measuring attitudes toward EMI) with **qualitative insights** (e.g., open-ended questions about instructors' personal experiences and challenges). This structure allows for a well-rounded analysis of the research problem.

By utilizing this questionnaire, the study aims to provide empirical evidence on the current status of English implementation in Political Science and Law faculties at Setif2 University. The responses collected will serve as the foundation for drawing conclusions and making policy recommendations to facilitate a smoother transition to EMI.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on the questionnaire responses from the **12 university teachers** sampled from the Political Science and Law faculties at Setif2 University. The data collected reveals the extent of **English implementation**, the primary **language used for instruction**, and the **challenges** faced by educators. The discussion interprets these findings in relation to the study's objectives.

1. Language Used for Teaching

One of the key objectives of this study was to determine the **primary language of instruction** in Political Science and Law faculties. The responses indicate that **Arabic remains the dominant language**, while English is **rarely used or completely absent** from teaching. The table below presents the frequency of language usage among the surveyed teachers.

Table 1: Language Used in Teaching

Language Used	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Arabic	12	100%
French	8	67%

Language Used	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
English	2	17%

Discussion:

- All respondents (100%) confirmed that Arabic is the primary language of instruction.
- French is also widely used (67%), particularly for referencing legal and political texts.
- Only 17% of the teachers reported using English, and even then, it was only for minor references or terminology, not as a medium of instruction.

- This result highlights the **absence of English** as a teaching language, despite ministerial decrees promoting its integration.

2. Frequency of English Use in Lectures

To assess whether English is being integrated gradually, teachers were asked how often they use English in their lectures. The responses are displayed in the table below.

Table 2: Frequency of English Use in Teaching

Frequency of English Use	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Never	10	83%
Rarely	2	17%
Occasionally	0	0%
Frequently	0	0%
Always	0	0%

Discussion:

- A majority (83%) of teachers reported **never using English** in their lectures.
- Only 17% **use English rarely**, indicating occasional reference to English sources but not actual instruction.

- No teacher reported using English regularly, frequently, or always.
- This confirms that **English has not been implemented in Political Science and Law faculties** as a medium of instruction.

3. Reasons for Not Using English

Teachers were asked to identify the main reasons preventing them from using English in their courses. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Barriers to Using English in Teaching

Reason	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Lack of English proficiency	9	75%
Students' poor English level	10	83%
Lack of institutional support	6	50%
Absence of English-language materials	7	58%

Discussion:

- The **most cited reason (83%)** was that students **lack sufficient English proficiency** to understand lectures.
- **75% of teachers admitted to not being comfortable teaching in English**, showing a **skills gap** among instructors.
- **50% pointed out the absence of institutional support**, including **lack of training programs and incentives** to adopt EMI.
- **58% noted the lack of teaching materials in English**, making it difficult to transition to an English-based curriculum.

These findings indicate that **both faculty and students face linguistic challenges**, and the **university has not provided the necessary support** for an effective transition to English instruction.

4. Teachers' Attitudes towards Using English

Teachers were asked about their willingness to use English if proper training and support were provided. The responses are presented below.

Table 4: Teachers' Willingness to Use English in the Future

Response	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Yes, with training and materials	7	58%
No, Arabic should remain the only language	3	25%
Uncertain	2	17%

Discussion:

- **58% of teachers expressed willingness to use English** if proper **training and materials** were provided.
- **25% preferred Arabic to remain the only language**, citing its relevance to Algerian political and legal contexts.
- **17% were unsure**, suggesting a need for clearer institutional policies on EMI implementation.

This indicates that while most teachers are **open to using English**, they **require institutional support** to overcome linguistic and pedagogical challenges.

5. Institutional Support for English Implementation

To determine whether teachers receive support from the university for English use, they were asked about **training programs, resources, and incentives** available for EMI adoption.

Table 5: Institutional Support for English Implementation

Type of Support	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Training workshops	1	8%
Availability of English materials	9	75%
Institutional encouragement	3	25%
No support provided	2	17%

Discussion:

- **17% of teachers reported receiving no support** from the university regarding English implementation.
- Only **8% had access to training workshops**, indicating a **lack of capacity-building initiatives** for faculty.
- **75% acknowledged the availability of some English materials**, but these were insufficient for full EMI adoption.
- **25% felt encouraged by the institution** but noted that encouragement alone was not enough without concrete training and resources.

These results suggest that the **university has not actively facilitated the transition to English**, making it difficult for faculty members to incorporate EMI into their teaching practices.

Conclusion of Results

The findings from the questionnaire clearly indicate that:

✓ **Arabic remains the sole language of instruction**, while **English is almost never used** in Political Science and Law faculties.

✓ **The majority of teachers lack the proficiency to teach in English** and believe that **students' poor English skills** make EMI impractical.

✓ **Institutional support is largely absent**, with most teachers receiving **no training, incentives, or materials** to facilitate English instruction.

✓ **While some teachers are willing to use English if support is provided**, others believe Arabic should remain the primary teaching language.

Implications of Findings

- If the Ministry of Higher Education intends to **enforce English implementation**, there must be a **structured transition plan**, including **teacher training programs, student language preparation, and access to English resources**.
- Without institutional support, the **status quo (teaching in Arabic and French) will remain unchanged**, regardless of policy directives.

IV. General Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the current status of English implementation in the teaching of Political Science and Law at Setif2 University. Through an analysis of questionnaire responses from university instructors, the study confirms that **English is not used as a medium of instruction**, and Arabic remains the dominant language. The research sought to address several key questions: **Is English currently implemented in Political Science and Law faculties? What are the main barriers to its adoption? How do faculty members perceive English as a potential teaching language? And what institutional support, if any, is available for English instruction?** The results indicate that while policy reforms advocate for EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), **practical implementation remains nonexistent** due to linguistic, pedagogical, and institutional constraints.

First, regarding the question of **whether English is implemented as a teaching language**, the data clearly shows that **Arabic is used by 100% of faculty members**, and **French is frequently used for reference purposes**. Only **17% of teachers occasionally mention English** in their courses, but **none use it as a full instructional language**. This finding highlights a significant gap between **ministerial policies promoting English adoption and the actual classroom reality**. The study concludes that **English is not currently implemented** in any meaningful way in Political Science and Law faculties, which raises concerns about the feasibility of transitioning to EMI in the near future.

The second key research question addressed **the main barriers to using English in teaching**. The study identified several challenges, including **faculty members' lack of English proficiency (75%)**, **students' poor English language skills (83%)**, **the absence of institutional support (50%)**, and a **lack of English-language teaching materials (58%)**. These findings suggest that the **resistance to EMI is not due to opposition to English itself but rather to the practical difficulties associated with its adoption**. Both teachers and students face linguistic challenges that **prevent the successful integration of English into university courses**, and without proper training and resources, the transition remains highly unlikely.

The third research question explored **faculty members' perceptions of English as a teaching language**. The findings show that **58% of teachers would be willing to use English if they received adequate training and materials**, whereas **25% believe Arabic should remain the only instructional language**, and **17% are uncertain**. This suggests that while there is **some openness to EMI**, the **majority of faculty members do not currently feel equipped to teach in English**. Furthermore, **many instructors express concerns about the readiness of students**, arguing that **most Political Science and Law students do not possess the necessary English proficiency to comprehend complex legal and political concepts in a foreign language**. This raises fundamental questions about **whether students themselves should receive additional English training before implementing EMI**.

Finally, the study examined **institutional support for English implementation** and found that **17% of faculty members reported receiving no support from the university**. While some teachers acknowledged **great encouragement from the administration (25%)**, this did not translate into **practical assistance, such as training programs, teaching materials, or structured transition plans**. Only **8% of instructors reported access to EMI-related training workshops**, which is an **insufficient number for large-scale policy implementation**. These findings highlight a **serious gap between policy ambitions and institutional readiness**, suggesting that the current approach to EMI is **not accompanied by the necessary structural reforms to make it successful**.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that **English has not been implemented as a teaching language** in Political Science and Law faculties at Setif2 University. The main obstacles include **faculty and student language limitations, lack of training, and insufficient institutional support**. While some educators are open to using English, the current conditions make it impossible for EMI to function effectively. If universities are serious about transitioning to EMI, they must **develop concrete strategies, including teacher training programs, student English language courses, access to English academic resources, and clear policy frameworks**. Without these steps, English will remain a policy objective rather than an educational reality.

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Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems

ISSN: 2790-0169 / 2790-0177



DOI prefix

10.56334/sei
