


IMPACT OF ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION ON ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract. *This study explores how English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) shapes the professional identities of Algerian university teachers. Using a qualitative approach, it draws on semi-structured interviews with 38 lecturers from three academic institutes at Batna 2 University to examine their experiences, challenges, and strategies for adaptation. The findings reveal that teachers navigate a shift from initial linguistic insecurity to growing confidence, supported by reflective practices, informal peer collaboration, and adaptive pedagogical strategies. As they adjust to EMI, their roles evolve from subject specialists to dual facilitators of content and language, balancing disciplinary expertise with linguistic mediation. Three key themes emerged: pedagogical selfhood, capturing shifts in self-perception and professional agency; pedagogical adaptation, reflecting strategies for integrating language and subject knowledge; and relational practice, emphasizing student engagement and peer support. Limited institutional training and cultural tensions added to the complexity of their experiences, making adaptation largely self-driven. A key finding was the reliance on informal professional networks as a source of support. These results highlight the need for structured professional development, institutional backing, and culturally responsive policies to better support teachers in EMI settings.*

Key words: *English Medium Instruction, professional identity, pedagogical adaptation, institutional support, Algerian Higher Education.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global shift towards English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education has become a defining feature of the internationalization of academic systems, particularly in non-English-speaking countries (Tulepova, Bekturova, Gaipov, & Butt, 2024). EMI, defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the primary language, has been adopted to enhance global competitiveness, improve students' linguistic skills, and foster international academic collaboration (Dearden, 2014; Macaro, 2018). However, this transition is not without challenges, particularly for teachers who must navigate the dual demands of delivering subject content in English while supporting students' language development (Airey, 2011; Deveci, Ayish, & Midraj, 2023; Dang, Bonar, & Yao, 2023). In Algeria, the adoption of EMI represents a significant

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shift in the country's linguistic and educational landscape, reflecting broader efforts to internationalize higher education and reduce dependence on French, the legacy of colonial influence (Miliani, 2012; Khenioui & Bouikroun, 2023).

Algeria's linguistic history is marked by a complex interplay of Arabic, French, and, more recently, English. Following independence in 1962, the Algerian government initiated an Arabization policy to restore national identity, replacing French with Arabic in education and administration (Miliani, 2012; Hamzaoui, 2021). However, this policy faced significant challenges, including a lack of qualified Arabic instructors and difficulties in scientific fields due to the scarcity of Arabic resources (Hamzaoui, 2024). Despite these efforts, French remained dominant in higher education, administration, and business, creating a linguistic divide between Arabic and French speakers (Belmihoub, 2018; Rezig, 2011). In recent years, Algeria has witnessed a gradual shift towards English, driven by its global importance and the need for scientific and technological development (Touahmia & Bakar, 2024; Hamzaoui, 2021). This shift culminated in 2023 with the Algerian government replacing French with English as the primary medium of instruction in various university programs, aligning with global trends in EMI (Khenioui & Bouikroun, 2023; Hamzaoui, 2024).

While the adoption of EMI in Algerian higher education aims to enhance international academic exchange, research visibility, and graduate employability (Dearden, 2014; Macaro, 2018), it also presents significant challenges for teachers who must navigate the linguistic and pedagogical demands of EMI, often with limited institutional support and training (Ben-Yelles, 2024; Hamzaoui, 2024). These challenges are compounded by the historical and cultural tensions between local values and global academic norms, which influence how teachers perceive their professional roles and identities (Ghouali & Bouabdallah, 2024).

This research seeks to explore how Algerian university teachers, particularly lecturers at Batna 2 University, perceive the impact of EMI on their professional identity. It also examines how their self-perceptions evolve as they navigate the demands of teaching in English and how these perceptions shape their professional identity in the EMI context. The study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on EMI and professional identity, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers in non-English-speaking contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Teachers' Professional Identity

Teachers' professional identity refers to the way they perceive and define themselves within their professional roles. It encompasses their beliefs about teaching, their sense of purpose, and their alignment with institutional and disciplinary expectations. Professional identity reflects how teachers see their responsibilities, interact with students and colleagues, and position themselves within the broader educational system. It is a complex and evolving construct shaped by self-perception, pedagogical beliefs, institutional roles, and broader socio-cultural influences (Rebenko, 2020). Unlike a fixed characteristic, professional identity is continuously reshaped through experience, reflection, and engagement with professional communities (Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee, 2000). It emerges at the intersection of personal values, disciplinary knowledge, and the expectations imposed by educational institutions and society at large. Teachers not only define their roles in relation to students and

colleagues, but also navigate shifting educational policies, institutional cultures, and external pressures that influence their professional trajectories (Wenger, 1998).

As teacher identity is not static but constantly evolving, it is shaped by a combination of personal and social dimensions. It involves an interplay between self-perception, role negotiation, and professional engagement, influenced by how teachers see themselves and how they are positioned within their institutions and wider educational communities (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). Sachs (2005) emphasizes that teacher identity is not something imposed, but rather negotiated through experience. This negotiation occurs within multiple contexts, including personal, instructional, and institutional domains, where teachers adjust to new students, evolving job expectations, and shifting educational demands (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pennington & Richards, 2016). In addition to these factors, occupational identity plays a critical role in shaping professional identity. It encompasses career readiness, personality, and professional development, highlighting the importance of self-readiness for career decision-making and the continuous interaction between individual characteristics and professional responsibilities (Vondracek et al., 1995; Ireri et al., 2013).

Institutional and societal influences also contribute to the development of teachers' professional identity. Pennington and Richards (2016) distinguish between *foundational competences*, such as language-related identity, disciplinary identity, and self-awareness, and *advanced competences*, including community membership and the ability to integrate knowledge into practice. The impact of these influences is particularly evident in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and foreign language (FL) teaching contexts, where teachers must balance content expertise with linguistic mediation. Research in EMI settings highlights the role of contextual factors in shaping identity, as teachers must navigate cultural expectations, institutional policies, and student needs (Tao & Gao, 2018). Additionally, studies suggest that a lack of clear professional identity in language teaching can contribute to lower student motivation, underscoring the importance of fostering identity development in educational settings (Taylor et al., 2013).

Ultimately, teachers' professional identity is the result of a continuous, dynamic interaction between personal characteristics, institutional roles, and socio-cultural influences. It is constructed through reflection, adaptation, and engagement with professional communities, allowing teachers to redefine their roles in response to evolving pedagogical and institutional demands. Understanding this fluid nature of teacher identity is essential for developing more effective professional development programs and fostering supportive educational environments that empower teachers to navigate their roles with confidence and clarity.

2.2. Challenges and Transformations in EMI Contexts

Research on EMI highlights the multifaceted challenges university lecturers face as they navigate their professional identities. While teaching in English often enhances teachers' sense of global relevance, it can also provoke internal conflicts. For example, Ou and Gu (2024) observed that many teachers struggle to reconcile their roles as subject matter experts with the linguistic demands of EMI, leading to professional uncertainty. For some teachers, proficiency in English becomes a marker of professional legitimacy, creating pressure to meet institutional and student expectations (Heron, 2024).

Linguistic challenges further complicate this process. Wang and Jiang (2025) found that many EMI teachers feel underprepared in their English proficiency, which undermines their confidence and perceived authority. As a coping strategy, they often simplify academic

English to minimize errors, which, as Norro (2024) suggests, may unintentionally affect their professional credibility.

Institutional and cultural factors amplify these challenges. Dang et al. (2023) highlight the lack of structured institutional support, which leaves many EMI teachers feeling isolated and unsupported. Additionally, Wang and Jiang (2025) explored cultural tensions in EMI contexts where English symbolizes Western influence, revealing that teachers often face resistance when balancing global academic standards with local cultural values. In Algeria, these cultural and institutional challenges are further compounded by the historical dominance of French and limited professional development opportunities for EMI teachers (Hamzaoui, 2021; Ben-Yelles, 2024).

Professional identity transformations in EMI settings often require teachers to reflect on their values and adapt their practices. Dang et al. (2023) argue that professional identity evolves through the internalization of norms and values, which is particularly relevant in Algeria, where EMI teachers must navigate new linguistic and instructional demands. Studies in Vietnam and China have shown that EMI adoption can lead to profound transformations in professional identity as teachers engage in self-reflection and adopt new pedagogical strategies (Dang et al., 2024; Wang & Jiang, 2025). These changes underscore the dynamic and context-dependent nature of professional identity in EMI contexts.

Despite extensive research on EMI and its impact on teachers' professional identities, significant gaps remain, particularly in non-English-speaking contexts such as Algeria. While existing studies highlight the linguistic, institutional, and cultural challenges that EMI teachers encounter (e.g., Dang et al., 2023; Wang & Jiang, 2025), how these challenges shape professional identity in Algerian higher education remains largely unexplored. Most research has focused on EMI in Asian and European universities, leaving Algerian lecturers' experiences underexamined.

Additionally, much of the literature has emphasized teachers' linguistic preparedness and pedagogical adjustments, yet fewer studies have explored the psychosocial dimensions of identity transformation, including professional legitimacy, self-perception, and the emotional impact of EMI (Ou & Gu, 2024; Heron, 2024). Given Algeria's historical and linguistic complexities, where French continues to dominate academia, EMI teachers may navigate distinct pressures, evolving expectations, and identity shifts that warrant further investigation (Hamzaoui, 2021; Ben-Yelles, 2024).

To address these gaps, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Algerian university teachers perceive the impact of EMI on their professional identity?
2. How do their self-perceptions evolve as they navigate the challenges of teaching in English?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study builds on Bakhtin's (1993) notions of I-for-self, I-for-others, and others-for-me, providing a dialogic perspective on how professional identity emerges through self-perception, external expectations, and relational dynamics. These concepts are further enriched by Moate's (2013) dialogic framework of pedagogical being, pedagogical doing, and pedagogical relating, which provides a structured understanding of the evolving identities of teachers in EMI contexts.

Bakhtin's theoretical framework emphasizes the relational and co-constructed nature of identity:

- I-for-self involves teachers' self-reflection on their values, beliefs, and teaching philosophies in an EMI setting. This includes their internal struggle to redefine their professional roles as they transition to teaching in English.
- I-for-others represents how teachers perceive external expectations from students, colleagues, and institutions. For instance, teachers may feel pressure to demonstrate English proficiency as a measure of credibility.
- Others-for-me captures how external feedback and societal perceptions influence teachers' self-perceptions, emphasizing the dialogic interplay between internal and external forces.

Moate (2013) expands Bakhtin's framework by articulating three dimensions of teacherhood:

- Pedagogical being refers to teachers' philosophical orientation toward their roles and responsibilities. In EMI, this involves reconciling personal teaching philosophies with the linguistic and cultural challenges of working in a multilingual environment. Algerian teachers, for example, must align their pedagogical values with institutional expectations while navigating their sense of vulnerability in teaching a non-native language.
- Pedagogical doing focuses on the deliberate teaching strategies employed to facilitate learning. EMI teachers must engage in adaptive practices, such as integrating visual aids, scaffolding language learning, and creating interactive classrooms to overcome linguistic barriers. The centrality of language in these practices underscores its role as both a tool and a challenge in EMI (Moate, 2013).
- Pedagogical relating emphasizes the relationships teachers build with students, colleagues, and institutions. In Algeria, where institutional support for EMI is limited, teachers often rely on peer collaboration and student feedback to foster a sense of professional community (Ghouali & Bouabdallah, 2024). This relational dimension is critical for developing mutual understanding and shared practices in EMI contexts.

This study conceptualizes professional identity as comprising pedagogical selfhood, pedagogical action, and relational practice, aligning with Bakhtin's and Moate's frameworks:

- Pedagogical selfhood reflects teachers' evolving sense of self and purpose in EMI.
- Pedagogical action encompasses the intentional teaching strategies that address linguistic and cultural complexities.
- Relational practice involves building meaningful connections within the EMI ecosystem to support learning and professional growth.

By adopting this theoretical lens, the study aims to uncover how Algerian university teachers navigate the demands of EMI and how these experiences shape their professional identities.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate how EMI impacts Algerian university teachers' professional identities. This approach is particularly suited to exploring individual experiences, meanings, and identity negotiations in naturalistic educational settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

4.2. Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at Batna 2 University, focusing on three institutes that represent diverse academic disciplines and pedagogical contexts. A total of 38 teachers, all with a minimum of two years of EMI teaching experience, participated in the study. The participants were drawn from seven departments across the institutes of Prevention and Industrial Safety, Earth and Universe Sciences, and Sciences and Techniques of Physical and Sports Activities. The table below summarizes key demographic information about the participants, including their distribution across institutes, age categories, gender, teaching experience, and educational background.

Table 1 Participants' characteristics

Institute	Department	Number of Participants	Age Categories	Gender Distribution	Teaching Experience	Educational Background
Institute of Prevention and Industrial Safety	Working Conditions	5	25–34 (3), 35–44 (2)	3 Male, 2 Female	2–10 years (3), 10+ years (2)	1 trained abroad; 4 local postgraduate degrees
	Environment	4	35–44 (3), 45–54 (1)	2 Male, 2 Female	10+ years (4)	2 trained abroad; 2 local postgraduate degrees
	Industrial Safety	4	25–34 (2), 45–54 (2)	3 Male, 1 Female	2–10 years (3), 10+ years (1)	All local postgraduate degrees
Institute of Earth and Universe Sciences	Geography and Regional Planning	6	25–34 (2), 35–44 (4)	4 Male, 2 Female	2–10 years (4), 10+ years (2)	3 trained abroad; 3 local postgraduate degrees
	Geology	6	25–34 (3), 45–54 (3)	3 Male, 3 Female	2–10 years (3), 10+ years (3)	2 trained abroad; 4 local postgraduate degrees
Institute of Sciences and Techniques of Physical and Sports Activities	Educational Physical and Sports Activity	7	25–34 (4), 35–44 (3)	5 Male, 2 Female	2–10 years (6), 10+ years (1)	1 trained abroad; 6 local postgraduate degrees
	Sports Training	6	35–44 (4), 45–54 (2)	4 Male, 2 Female	2–10 years (2), 10+ years (4)	All local postgraduate degrees
Total		38	25–34 (14), 35–44 (18), 45–54 (6)	24 Male, 14 Female	2–10 years (23), 10+ years (15)	11 trained abroad, 27 local postgraduate degrees

Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, which allowed practical access to individuals within the university campus while ensuring diversity in demographic and professional attributes. Recruitment was conducted through direct outreach to teachers across the selected departments, ensuring their availability and willingness to participate.

4.3. Data Collection

The primary method of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted during the first three weeks of December 2024. The interview protocol included 10 open-ended questions that explored teachers' perceptions of EMI, their evolving professional identities, and the strategies they used to address challenges of teaching in English (see Appendix for the complete list of questions).

Interviews were conducted in Arabic and French, depending on participants' preferences, to ensure clarity and comfort. This allowed teachers to express their thoughts freely and authentically. A total of 38 interviews were conducted: 31 took place onsite, either in participants' offices or in department meeting rooms, while 7 were conducted via WhatsApp to accommodate teachers' busy schedules or overseas training commitments. Each interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. This flexible and participant-centered approach ensured that rich, detailed data were collected, while respecting participants' schedules and circumstances.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in their original languages. The transcripts were later translated into English for analysis and reporting. Particular attention was given to preserving the original meaning and cultural nuances in the translations. To ensure accuracy, bilingual colleagues reviewed the translations and provided feedback. When specific terms or expressions were difficult to translate, discussions were held to maintain their contextual relevance.

4.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. In the first step, the transcripts were thoroughly reviewed to ensure familiarity with the data and to identify initial patterns. Key segments of the data were then coded to capture recurring ideas. These codes were organized into broader categories, which were further refined into overarching themes that aligned with the study's objectives.

The process of translation was carefully integrated into the analysis. The English versions of the transcripts were cross-checked against the original texts to ensure that the translations reflected the nuances of participants' responses. Three multilingual colleagues reviewed the translations to verify their accuracy and consistency. This additional step reinforced the reliability of the data while preserving the authenticity of the participants' narratives.

4.5. Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several strategies were implemented. First, interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages to enhance clarity and allow them to express their thoughts freely. Additionally, to strengthen credibility, participants

reviewed their transcripts to verify the accuracy of the data. Moreover, transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participant demographics, and institutional settings, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Furthermore, dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the research process, including interview protocols, data collection procedures, and the thematic analysis framework. In addition, confirmability was reinforced through a rigorous translation process, where translations were reviewed and cross-checked to maintain accuracy. Finally, reflexive journaling was used to document researcher biases, assumptions, and decision-making processes, ensuring that interpretations remained grounded in the data and minimizing the influence of personal biases.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and ensure the integrity of the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study before providing their written consent. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and all data were securely stored. Participation was voluntary, with participants assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis of the data according to the two research questions. Each question is analyzed through the lens of Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six Phases of Thematic Analysis.

5.1. Perceptions of the Impact of EMI on Teachers' Professional Identity

The first research question investigates how Algerian university teachers perceive the influence of EMI on their professional identity, focusing on changes in roles, teaching practices, and relational dynamics.

5.1.1. Phase 1: Familiarization with the data

The initial review of the data highlighted recurring patterns in teachers' reflections on their professional identity. Many participants described feeling like novices again when they began teaching in English, particularly when dealing with linguistic challenges and role adjustments. One teacher explained, *"Teaching in English felt like starting all over again—I wasn't just delivering content, but also navigating how to explain it clearly in a language I wasn't fully confident in."* However, there were also moments of pride and professional validation as teachers saw their students engaging in English. Another participant remarked, *"When I noticed students participating and understanding, it gave me a sense of accomplishment and reassured me of my professional capabilities."*

5.1.2. Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Key codes were identified from the data, capturing the teachers' experiences and efforts to adapt to EMI. Examples of these codes include:

- Confidence building: Teachers gained confidence over time as they adjusted to EMI demands.
- Role redefinition: Teachers described a shift in their perception of their professional role.
- Scaffolding strategies: Strategies to simplify and clarify complex concepts.
- Collaborating with colleagues: Seeking peer support to navigate EMI challenges.

5.1.3. Phase 3: Searching for themes

The initial codes were grouped into broader categories, resulting in three overarching themes represented in Table 2.

Table 2 Themes and illustrative examples of teachers' adaptation to EMI

Theme	Categories	Examples from Data
Pedagogical Selfhood	Role redefinition	<i>I had to rethink my role—not just a content expert but someone who supports students' English learning.</i>
	Confidence building	<i>Over time, I started seeing EMI as an opportunity for growth rather than a limitation.</i>
Pedagogical Action	Adaptation of strategies	<i>I simplified my materials and used visuals to help students understand complex ideas.</i>
	Scaffolding	<i>I pre-teach vocabulary and use local examples to make lessons more relatable.</i>
Relational Practice	Building rapport	<i>Encouraging questions and addressing mistakes without judgment helped students feel more confident in English.</i>
	Peer collaboration	<i>I often ask colleagues how they handle EMI challenges—we share ideas and learn from one another.</i>

5.1.4. Phases 4–6: Reviewing, defining, and reporting themes

The analysis revealed three interconnected themes that illustrate how EMI has influenced teachers' professional identities: pedagogical selfhood, pedagogical action, and relational practice. These themes reflect the multifaceted ways in which teachers navigate the demands of EMI, balancing self-perception, teaching strategies, and relationships within their professional environments.

a. Pedagogical selfhood

Pedagogical selfhood emerged as a central theme, underscoring the profound transformation in teachers' self-perceptions and professional philosophies. Many participants expressed how EMI reshaped their roles, moving beyond subject matter expertise to include language facilitation. As one teacher explained, *"Before teaching in EMI, I saw myself primarily as a content expert. Now, I realize I also have to be a language mediator."*

This shift highlights the dual challenge of teaching specialized content while addressing linguistic barriers. Several teachers identified reflection as a vital tool in navigating this transformation. One respondent remarked, *"I had to reconsider my approach to ensure that my teaching aligned with both the students' language levels and my own professional values."* Confidence building was also a recurring subtheme, with many teachers describing how adapting to EMI fostered their self-assurance. One participant

shared, *“Initially, I doubted my ability to teach effectively in English, but now I see myself as a more adaptable educator.”*

The journey of reconstructing professional identity often began with feelings of inadequacy but evolved into a sense of resourcefulness and adaptability. This reflective growth not only enhanced teachers’ confidence but also deepened their understanding of their professional roles in EMI.

b. Pedagogical action

The second theme, pedagogical action, captured the deliberate strategies employed by teachers to address EMI-specific challenges. Participants frequently mentioned adapting their teaching methods to accommodate students with varying levels of English proficiency. One teacher described, *“I integrate visuals, videos, and real-life examples to make my lectures more accessible to students with different language abilities.”* These strategies underscore the dynamic and multimodal nature of EMI teaching.

A notable subtheme was the adaptation of assessment methods. Teachers emphasized the importance of creating equitable opportunities for all students to succeed. One participant explained, *“Standard exams don’t always work in EMI. I’ve had to create assignments that account for students’ language limitations.”* This aligns with research highlighting the need for flexible assessment practices in EMI contexts to ensure inclusivity.

Interactive teaching methods also emerged as a significant pedagogical adaptation. One teacher shared, *“Group discussions allow students to use both English and their native language, which encourages participation and builds confidence.”* By fostering an inclusive learning environment, teachers demonstrated how pedagogical action extends beyond content delivery to empowering students to engage meaningfully with their learning.

c. Relational practice

Relational practice emerged as a critical theme, emphasizing the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with students, peers, and institutions. Teachers recognized the centrality of rapport in supporting student engagement. One participant stated, *“When students feel understood and supported, they’re more willing to engage, even in a foreign language.”* By creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, teachers helped mitigate the anxiety students often experience in EMI settings.

Peer collaboration was another significant aspect of relational practice. Teachers frequently relied on their colleagues to share strategies for navigating EMI challenges. One participant shared, *“We regularly exchange strategies for handling EMI challenges, from managing diverse classrooms to refining our language skills.”* This sense of community and shared problem-solving provided valuable support for teachers facing the complexities of EMI.

Institutional engagement, however, presented mixed experiences. While some departments provided resources and training, others lacked adequate support systems. One teacher lamented, *“While some departments provide resources, others leave us to navigate EMI alone.”* This variability highlights the need for more consistent institutional support to enable teachers to thrive in EMI contexts.

5.2. The Evolution of Self-Perceptions in EMI Contexts

The second research question focuses on how teachers' self-perceptions evolve as they navigate the demands of EMI and how these changes shape their professional identity. The analysis revealed a clear trajectory from linguistic insecurity to confidence, facilitated by reflection and adaptation.

5.2.1. Phase 1: Familiarization with the data

The initial review of the data highlighted a clear progression in how teachers perceived themselves professionally. Many participants described feeling inadequate or unprepared at the start of their EMI journey due to linguistic challenges. As one teacher admitted, *"I worried my students would judge me for my English. I wasn't sure if I could handle their expectations in a language that isn't my first."* Over time, however, this self-doubt shifted to a sense of accomplishment and growth. Another participant shared, *"After every lecture, I felt more confident. Each class was a reminder that I could manage EMI better than I initially thought."* This phase provided insight into the emotional and cognitive struggles teachers faced and set the stage for identifying recurring patterns of growth and adaptation.

5.2.2. Phase 2: Generating initial codes

In this phase, key segments of the data were coded to reflect the evolution of teachers' self-perceptions. Examples of initial codes included:

- Linguistic insecurity: Referring to early fears of judgment and inadequacy.
- Building confidence: Highlighting gradual self-assurance through experience.
- Reflection on practice: Describing how teachers evaluated their performance.
- Adapting to feedback: Referring to adjustments based on student and peer responses.
- Expanding professional roles: Reflecting the growing understanding of their dual role as teachers and language facilitators.

5.2.3. Phase 3: Searching for themes

The initial codes were grouped into three broader themes that captured the progression of self-perceptions over time.

Table 3 Themes and illustrative examples of teachers' development in EMI

Theme	Categories	Examples from Data
Linguistic Insecurity to Confidence	Initial fears	<i>I worried my students would judge me for my English, but I've learned to focus on clarity instead of perfection.</i>
	Gaining confidence	<i>With each successful lecture, I felt more capable and in control.</i>
Reflective Growth	Self-assessment	<i>I think about what worked in each lesson and adjust my approach accordingly.</i>
	Adaptation	<i>I've learned to adapt based on student feedback—it's made me more effective.</i>
Evolving Professional Identity	Role expansion	<i>EMI has made me more than a teacher. I see myself as a guide who helps students navigate language and learning.</i>

5.2.4. Phase 4: Reviewing themes

The themes were reviewed and refined for coherence. For instance, “building confidence” was consolidated under “linguistic insecurity to confidence”, while “adapting to feedback” was refined into reflective growth to emphasize the ongoing process of learning and adaptation. This phase ensured that the themes fully captured the depth and complexity of the teachers’ experiences.

5.2.5. Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

The final themes were named to highlight the distinct stages of transformation in teachers’ self-perceptions:

1. Linguistic insecurity to confidence: The journey from self-doubt and fear of judgment to confidence in handling EMI challenges.
2. Reflective growth: The role of self-assessment and adaptation in professional improvement.
3. Evolving professional identity: The expansion of teachers’ roles and the realization of their dual responsibilities as teachers and language mediators.

5.2.6. Phase 6: Reporting and interpreting the findings

The final phase of the thematic analysis involves presenting and interpreting the findings in a coherent and structured manner to illustrate the transformative process that teachers experience in an EMI context. The analysis highlights how self-perceptions evolve as teachers navigate linguistic challenges, reflect on their practices, and embrace expanded professional roles.

a. Linguistic Insecurity to Confidence

The findings reveal that many teachers initially struggled with linguistic barriers and a fear of judgment from students. One teacher admitted, *“At the beginning, I felt unprepared. Speaking in English was intimidating, especially in front of students.”* This fear often stemmed from concerns about their accent, vocabulary, or fluency.

However, as teachers gained more experience, these insecurities gradually diminished. Confidence grew through repeated practice and positive interactions with students. Another teacher shared, *“Each class reminded me that I could manage EMI better than I thought. Now, I focus on communicating clearly rather than perfectly.”* This progression from insecurity to confidence underscores the adaptability of teachers when faced with EMI’s demands.

b. Reflective growth

Reflection emerged as a pivotal driver of professional improvement, enabling teachers to refine their teaching methods and address challenges effectively. Teachers described how they regularly assessed their own performance to identify strengths and areas for improvement. As one participant explained, *“I think about each lesson carefully, especially when something doesn’t go as planned. It’s how I improve.”*

Feedback from students also played a key role in fostering growth. Teachers adjusted their approaches based on input, leading to more effective teaching practices. Another

teacher noted, *“Student feedback showed me where I needed to improve. I made changes, and it’s made my teaching more effective.”* This continuous process of self-assessment and adaptation highlights the importance of reflection in helping teachers meet the dual demands of EMI: delivering content and facilitating language learning.

c. Evolving professional identity

Through their experiences in EMI, teachers began to redefine their professional roles, expanding their responsibilities beyond those of traditional subject experts. One participant remarked, *“EMI has made me more than a teacher. I now see myself as someone who helps students navigate not only the content but also the language.”*

This shift in perspective reflects the dual role teachers take on in EMI contexts, where they must mediate both subject matter and language challenges. By embracing this expanded identity, teachers demonstrated resilience and adaptability, qualities essential for success in EMI environments.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined how Algerian university teachers perceive the impact of EMI on their professional identities and how their self-perceptions evolve while navigating the challenges of teaching in English. The findings highlight the transformative nature of EMI, revealing significant shifts in how teachers view themselves and their roles in higher education. Teachers described moving from initial linguistic insecurity to confidence, facilitated by reflective practices, adaptive strategies, and relational engagement with students and peers. These findings underscore the complexity of EMI, where teachers must balance the dual demands of content delivery and linguistic facilitation within a socio-cultural and institutional context that presents unique challenges.

In line with global EMI research, the results show that reflection and adaptation are essential for professional growth. Similar to findings from Vietnam and China (Dang et al., 2024; Wang & Jiang, 2025), Algerian teachers reported a redefinition of their roles, integrating subject expertise with language mediation. This shift highlights the dual challenges of pedagogy and language, a common theme in EMI contexts worldwide. However, unlike in resource-rich settings with structured professional development programs, Algerian teachers often relied on informal peer collaboration and self-initiated learning to address these challenges. This reliance reflects systemic gaps in institutional support and training, a recurring issue in the Algerian context.

Cultural dynamics added another layer of complexity to the findings. Teachers described navigating the tension between maintaining Algerian cultural norms and meeting global academic standards. This cultural balancing act reflects Algeria’s unique linguistic and historical background, where English is both a tool for internationalization and a symbol of independence from French colonial influence. Such dynamics set Algeria apart from other EMI contexts and highlight the need for culturally responsive teaching strategies that respect local traditions while fostering global competencies.

An unexpected finding was the prominence of peer collaboration as a compensatory mechanism for the lack of institutional support. Teachers shared strategies informally to navigate EMI challenges, emphasizing the importance of professional networks in resource-constrained environments. Additionally, the centrality of trust-building with students

reinforced the importance of relational practices in creating supportive learning environments, particularly in contexts where students often experience anxiety related to learning in a non-native language.

Although the study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The research focused on a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other universities in Algeria. The cross-sectional nature of the study captures only a snapshot of teachers' experiences, leaving room for further exploration of how professional identities evolve over time. Additionally, while care was taken to ensure accurate translations of interview transcripts, the nuances of meaning may have been affected.

Future research could address these limitations by including multiple institutions and adopting longitudinal approaches to explore the dynamic nature of professional identity transformation. Comparative studies across neighboring countries with similar linguistic and historical contexts, such as Tunisia or Morocco, could also provide valuable insights. Furthermore, investigating the impact of structured professional development programs tailored to Algeria's unique EMI context would help bridge existing institutional gaps and support teachers more effectively.

In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative impact of EMI on Algerian university teachers, illustrating their resilience and adaptability as they navigate linguistic, cultural, and institutional challenges. While the findings align with global EMI research in emphasizing reflection, adaptation, and relational practices, they also reveal unique contextual factors that shape the Algerian experience. Addressing these challenges requires tailored professional learning opportunities, increased institutional support, and culturally sensitive policies. By implementing these measures, policymakers and teachers can ensure that EMI serves as a catalyst for professional growth and internationalization in Algerian higher education, empowering teachers to thrive in their evolving roles and contributing to broader academic excellence.

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APPENIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How did you transition from teaching in another language to teaching in English?
2. How has teaching in English influenced your sense of professional identity? Have you experienced any shifts in how you perceive yourself as a university teacher?
3. In what ways, if any, has EMI affected your confidence and sense of authority in the classroom?
4. Do you feel that your subject expertise has been affected by the shift to EMI? If so, how do you manage the balance between content delivery and language facilitation?
5. What are the main linguistic challenges you face when teaching in English? How do you navigate these challenges in your teaching?
6. How do you perceive institutional support for EMI implementation? What types of professional development or training have you received, and do you feel they are sufficient?
7. How do cultural and historical factors influence your experience as an EMI teacher? Have you encountered resistance or support from students, colleagues, or administrators?
8. What strategies have you developed to adapt to EMI, both linguistically and pedagogically? Can you share any personal practices that have helped you manage the transition?
9. How do you engage with your colleagues and professional networks to navigate EMI challenges? Have informal peer collaborations played a role in your adaptation?
10. What recommendations would you make to improve EMI implementation in Algerian universities? What kind of support would you need to enhance both your professional identity and teaching effectiveness?