

English as a Medium of Instruction in Algerian Higher Business Degree Programmes

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Abstract : English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is expanding rapidly in the world. A growing volume of research has been dedicated to investigating its introduction, with findings that describe a complex picture and suggest that the practicality and effectiveness of EMI are still the subjects of debate. However, considerably less attention has been given to understanding EMI in a context where its introduction has been discussed but not yet put into practice. One such context is Algeria, where discourses about a potential introduction of EMI have been going on for some time. It is likely that the first courses where EMI is introduced are Business degree programmes. This study aims to examine the current discourses and attitudes towards the potential implementation of EMI and the language practices in Business degree programmes in three Algerian universities. The research is conducted in three different universities in three different regions in Algeria with the aim of including both 'centre' and 'periphery' Algerian universities. In order to achieve the previous aims, a mixed research paradigm is used. Questionnaires, semi structured interviews, and classroom observations are used to gather data from three participant cohorts: university students of Business, lecturers of Business, and lecturers of English for specific purposes. The findings showed that students and lecturers of Business are found in favour of the introduction of English instead of French or standard Arabic as a medium of instruction. The reason is that English is seen as having internationalisation and instrumental benefits, while French was too closely linked to the colonial history of the country. The favourable attitudes towards EMI, however, seem to contrast with the daily classroom practices at the departments of Business studies, where students and lecturers make practical choices of using their language repertoire based on their linguistic background and skills. Classrooms in the three Algerian universities featured fluid and translanguaging practices that cannot be reduced to a monolingual EMI policy.

Keywords : EMI, Algerian universities, business degree programmes, translanguaging

Conference Title : ICELL 2023 : International Conference on English Language and Linguistics

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : October 30-31, 2023