

## English as a Medium of Instruction in Tunisian Higher Education Institutions: Exploring Attitudes, Challenges, and Opportunities

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**Abstract :** To keep pace with the requirements of globalization, a lot of universities across the globe have started teaching various academic subjects in English. In Tunisia, two higher education institutions have embarked on the experience of teaching in English instead of French. The aim of the present study was threefold. First, it sought to explore the stakeholders' attitudes toward this shift. By stakeholders, we mean students and teachers. Second, it aimed at probing the challenges that might arise in the classroom. By challenges, we mean the linguistic and pedagogical difficulties that students and teachers might face. Third, the study investigated the reasons that led teachers and students to opt for English as a medium of instruction instead of French. The participants were 335 students and 14 teachers selected from two Tunisian universities teaching in English. Data was collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The findings showed that there is a positive attitude towards English, in contrast to French. In other words, both students and teachers are enjoying the experience, and they hope that English will officially become the medium of instruction in Tunisia. Students and teachers reported a number of linguistic and pedagogical challenges, and they mainly ascribed them to the abrupt transition from French to English. The vast majority of the respondents, be they students or teachers, opted for English as a medium of instruction to maximise their chances of getting a job abroad. It is also worth noting that most teachers stated that teaching through English helps them when it comes to publishing academic articles.

**Keywords :** attitudes, challenges, English as a medium of instruction, opportunities

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