

Investigation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Libyan Higher Education

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Abstract

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has largely been researched in the worldwide context. This study investigated Libyan teaching staff's preparedness for EMI. A qualitative case study design was used to collect data from EMI 30 lecturers in ten Libyan public universities. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire with Likert-scale and open-ended questions. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative responses were treated with thematic analysis. The main findings indicate pervasive concerns regarding students' English proficiency, dependence on code-switching, and the absence of a systematic EMI evaluation and training. These findings explicitly respond to the main research question, validating that EMI readiness, linguistic challenges, and assessment inefficiencies are pertinent challenges. The study concludes that successful EMI in Libya needs localized solutions, institutional commitment, and specialized pedagogical support to transition from symbolic adoption to substantive implementation.

Keywords: higher education, EMI in Libya, language barriers, lecturer perceptions.

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Introduction

The global expansion of English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) in non-Anglophone countries is a landscape of growing requests for English as a vehicle for gaining academic success, globalization, and competitiveness (AlKadi, 2018; Bouherar & Salem, 2025; Vander Borgh et al., 2025). As universities compete across borders for international recruitment and foster cross-border research collaborations, EMI is now an institutional strategic policy instrument for gaining prestige and connections with global scholarship networks (De Costa et al., 2022). Governments and tertiary education institutions in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe are demanding additional EMI programs, particularly for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The UAE, Turkey, China, and the Netherlands have been most receptive to incorporating EMI into their tertiary education sectors, where English is the guardian of global knowledge economies (Galloway et al., 2017). The change is not, however, without controversy. Researchers contend that EMI tends to reinforce linguistic hierarchies, marginalize local languages, and disadvantage learners and educators who are not proficient in English (Preece, 2019). The presumed improved quality of education provided by EMI is also debatable, particularly if not supplemented by pedagogical practices. In spite of EMI potentially opening global discourses, it can also conceal culturally embedded systems of epistemic diversity and knowledge (Phyak & Sah, 2024). Thus, the global pattern of EMI holds both potential and tensional force for internationalization, yet also demands critical attention to issues of equity, identity, and educational inclusivity in multilingual environments.

EMI in Libya

English language instruction in Libya has been the result of a complicated interplay between historical, political, and pedagogical factors. When first introduced in the colonial period of British and then Italian rule, English education mainly favored powerful groups politically and organizationally. Then, in 1951, after the liberation of Libya, English instruction began to be strengthened to a greater extent in the teaching framework, although the significance of the teaching fluctuated over the decades, depending on political shifts, such as the accession of Muammar Gaddafi to power in 1969. The government of Gaddafi emphasized Arabization and poor teaching of foreign languages such as English in Libyan schools, which led to a decline in the importance of English as a language of instruction during this era (Mohsen, 2014).

In the developing academy of Libya, information regarding whether English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) is valued, practiced, and assessed is not relevant—it counts. Universities struggle with pressures around language, policy uncertainty, and uneven institutional readiness (AlKadi, 2018; Stein, 2017). Aloreibi & Carey (2017) contend that despite challenges, English language teaching continued, chiefly in private language institutes and higher education institutions, where it was taught as a foreign language. Since the Gaddafi regime was brought down in 2011, Libya has been undertaking educational reforms that will revitalize teaching within the nation, and also an initiative to simplify and internationalize the teaching of the English language. Nevertheless, there are barriers to improved performance and access to English language education in Libya, such as a lack of teaching resources, teacher preparation, and background, and the necessity to continue to invest and support this essential area of the educational process (Adriosh, 2024).

Research Problem

Some educators regard EMI as a fast track to globalization, and some see it as a threat to pedagogic and cultural integrity. The big question is implementation. While some universities have embraced EMI with specially constructed programs and training, others rely on ad-hoc practices that leave both teachers and students to manage on their own (Jinghui, 2023).

Assessment, where it takes place, is similarly superficial—attending to surface-level results instead of actual linguistic or academic achievement (Khan et al., 2025). In the absence of a proper comprehension of such multi-level dynamics, EMI is in danger of being increasingly a buzzword instead of a benefit. It is not so much an issue of employing English, but how it is employed, by whom, and what support there is behind the scenes to have it serve instead of stifle education (Block, 2022).

Although the use of EMI in postsecondary education in Libya is growing, it is surprising that no empirical studies have been carried out to measure its real performance or objective constraints in the field. Not rooted in observations, but made on assumptions, and they are indeed in need of learning how far the EMI is correct in the area of quality teaching, student learning, and student academic achievement (Farrell, 2020). The effectiveness of educators and the credibility of policymakers are significantly enhanced by a profound understanding of current research. They are at risk of adopting meager practices or over-simplifying language, institution-level, and cultural barriers. This condition of unfamiliarity hinders informed decision-making and glacially slows effective and sustainable EMI in Libyan universities. To answer these gaps, the following research questions are formed.

1. What are lecturers' perceptions regarding the readiness of EMI in higher education in Libya?
2. What are language-related and instructional barriers faced in EMI implementation?
3. How is EMI evaluated, and what measures are in place to improve its efficacy?

Literature Review

EMI denotes teaching academic material through English as a medium in nations where most nationals know little or no English as a native language (Vander Borgh et al., 2025). It has nothing to do with the instruction of English—it's employing English to teach subjects such as engineering, medicine, or economics (AlKadi, 2018). Scholars such as Dearden (2014) and Macaro et al. (2016, 2018) highlight that EMI is most practiced in non-English-speaking contexts and places no priority on language learning as an outcome. Dafouz and Smit (2020) stated that EMI prioritizes content rather than building English proficiency, contrary to conventional language instruction. English can also be diverse in its application—it can be employed as a single language, or it can be blended with the native language by usage like code-switching. Macaro and Akıncioğlu (2018) add that this can be tailored to various educational and language environments because of its variability. What EMI is all about is rendering English a medium—not a target—of instruction.

The worldwide spread of EMI is not merely a policy change in education but also the intersection of commercial, political, and intellectual interests. Commercial stakeholders such as the British Council have actively promoted the growth of EMI since the early 2010s, presenting it as an international phenomenon through powerful reports and policy and practice advice. Conversely, institutions like the US Department of State highlight the pedagogical shift from English Language Teaching (ELT) to EMI and acknowledge the expansion into K-12 as well as tertiary education across the globe. The fact that Second Language (L2) testing is now included in the PISA 2024 of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2022) is also an indicator of the shift. EMI is no longer confined to non-Anglophone settings; multilingual settings within Anglophone universities negate the assumption that English is a second language and thus there would be some EMI (Vander Borgh et al., 2025). Scholars such as Baker and Hüttner (2017) take a broader view that includes such settings, characterizing generic problems such as managing accented English or comprehending challenging academic material (Doiz et al., 2019; Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Akıncioğlu, 2024). This international

convergence also suggests that EMI is not merely a pedagogy; it is an institutional part of an increasingly internationalizing space of learning that needs to be circumscribed contextually and multilingually.

EMI in Non-native Contexts

Patterns of EMI in non-native environments across the globe suggest a complex and often unequal environment regarding policy aspiration, institutional preparedness, and linguistic setting. In countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden, EMI has been implemented with relative ease due to good national English and good academic facilities. On the other hand, in other regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Asia, there is overall resistance towards the use of EMI due to a lack of language resources, teacher preparation, and a deficiency in student proficiency. In Turkey, for example, EMI policies are top-down and driven by globalization ambitions but also tend to conflict with classroom realities where both teachers and students lack fluency (Macaro et al., 2018). Likewise, in Japan and South Korea, EMI is envisioned as a gateway to global competitiveness but is faulted by educators for its uniform burden and absence of pedagogical assistance (Galloway et al., 2017). Another peril is the common oversight of multilingual processes, with local languages locked out instead of leveraged. Such monolingual bias can compromise academic achievement as well as cultural appropriateness (Genesee, 2022). Despite the diversity of contexts, the common concern is the mismatch between EMI policy and practice. In the absence of planning attuned to local conditions, teacher development, and language support mechanisms, EMI will remain a symbolic move instead of an effective educational change (Orduna-Nocito & Sánchez-García, 2022).

Challenges of EMI

EMI is an interrelated pedagogical, linguistic, and institutional issue that undermines its efficacy, especially in non-native settings (Khan, 2024). Pedagogically, teachers have the dual burden of teaching coursework in a target language even if they are not trained in EMI-specific pedagogy (Rai, 2024). With most of them being in pedagogies of lectures that limit interactivity and silence voices. At the language level, students and teachers have fluency, lexical dearth, and conventions of academic discourse (Kim et al., 2018). This convergence of proficiency expectations creates surface-level knowledge, low motivation, and high cognitive load, particularly when students are tested in English as compared to their native language. Institutional constraints also exacerbate the problem. Most universities implement EMI as components of internationalization agendas without investing in language support services, curriculum reform, or teacher development (De Costa et al., 2022). Administrative pressure to implement EMI may lead to a hasty introduction without consideration of contextual preparedness or stakeholder support (Hultgren et al., 2022). Lack of coordination and incoherent policy counseling and coordination challenges between content and language departments also create pressures. The exclusionary effect of English hegemony on mother languages is a threat to linguistic diversity and cultural identity (Ullah & Akram, 2023). Without system support and pedagogical imagination, EMI can be more performativity-oriented than transformative, widening education inequality rather than reducing it.

Theoretical Framework

A strong theoretical base for EMI research needs to incorporate language policy and planning (LPP), sociocultural theory of language learning (STLL), and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) evidence. LPP provides the macro context that explains how EMI arises via

ideological, political, and economic agendas (Cross, 2009). LPP condemns top-down policies that are responsible for EMI as a vehicle for internationalization at the cost of local linguistic landscapes and schooling contexts (Ou et al., 2022). These policies favor international competitiveness to the detriment of pedagogical context compatibility; therefore, classroom results and policy goals are misaligned. STLL is an issue about the mediation of learning regarding the social interaction, tools and culture. Language is not a medium of content in EMI classrooms, but a medium of meaning-making, which is affected by the cultural background of the learners, prior knowledge, and peer-group work. It emphasizes the role of scaffolding and dialogic teaching in making academic material meaningful in a second language (Lantolf, 2012). PCK on EMI emphasizes a special set of knowledge about the subject matter, knowledge about language, and pedagogy that teachers have to adopt (Mishra & Koehler, 2008). Successful EMI needs knowledge of the subject matter, but it needs more than knowledge of the subject matter—it needs linguistic sensitivity, diversity consciousness, and responsive pedagogy. Without these three theoretical pillars anchoring teachers, EMI will turn into a policy slogan rather than a pedagogically supported practice.

EMI in Higher Education: A Review of Related Studies

This review integrates the results of four large-scale research studies (Saragih, 2024; Simbolon, 2023; Bolton et al., 2024; Polli, 2024) on EMI in non-English-speaking university environments, i.e., Indonesia and Italy, to enrich the existing analysis of Libyan universities' use and effectiveness of EMI. The surveys provide methodological and theoretical comments alongside up-to-date challenges and limitations in the use of EMI. The four studies under discussion are all closely allied with EMI practices and perceptions in higher education institutions where English is not the primary language and, therefore, have corresponding analogs. Saragih (2024) and Simbolon (2023) reflect on EMI in Indonesia, an EFL context with very high contextual similarities to Libya. Bolton et al. (2024) also present data regarding EMI of Indonesian universities from the perspective of students and teachers. Polli (2024) offers Italian comparative evidence of the universities would be handy as it would offer a convenient European contextual counterpoint. All of them are beneficial to the Libyan situation as they have a base of common interests, trends, and research processes.

The overall pattern of the research is one of precarious equilibrium between the popularity of EMI and its actual practice. Saragih (2024) found that although most of the lecturers were already accustomed to the concept of EMI and practiced regularly in their professional life, they still faced severe difficulties in expressing arguments, explaining concepts, and preparing teaching materials in English. These are contrasted with students' low self-confidence and limited comprehension skills. Simbolon (2023) mentions the pragmatic logic of EMI, such as developing the English proficiency of students and improving their global competitiveness. The study also refers to the limited awareness of stakeholders of the wider implications of EMI. The lecturers tended to perceive EMI positively but referred to the absence of institutional readiness.

A more balanced perspective is provided by Bolton et al. (2024), who claim that Indonesian students' relatively excellent English competence allows them to typically handle EMI. Yet, in lecturers' interviews, latent worries are cited, for instance, content delivery and understanding problems. Polli (2024) compares Italian lecturers' intentions and concerns and presumably addresses the same linguistic and pedagogical challenges, including language anxiety and insufficient training. Throughout all these studies, code-switching was put forward as a common strategy to deal with linguistic problems. They employ diverse approaches, such as quantitative or mixed. Saragih (2024) administered questionnaires to 42 lecturers in some Indonesian universities; thus, it was feasible to determine some communication barriers.

Simbolon (2023) employs the identical survey approach, implementing the questionnaire on 41 vocational lecturers. A common limitation is dependence on partial and subjective self-reports. Bolton et al. (2024) completed questionnaires by virtue of interviews and thus provided more comprehensive and cross-checked data.

Polli's (2024) comparative strategy reinforces the strength of the current study's methodology in investigating EMI in different institutions. Even though not very elaborated in language, such research bears implications for the present theoretical notion of language policy, second language acquisition, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Saragih (2024) states that there is an intertwinement of ideas among EMI, globalization, and colonialism in sociolinguistic and cultural theories. Simbolon (2023) states pragmatic explanation of English learning goes along with internationalized education tendencies and theory on language motivation at the university level.

Despite increasing focus being laid on EMI, there is still a glaring gap. Saragih (2024) also refers to the need for further research with a special focus on English teachers teaching in EMI contexts. Likewise, although Polli (2024) reports on settings in Europe, more case studies with geographically greater coverage are required immediately. The current study, conducted in Libya, attempts to address such research gaps with evidence from a North African setting. Longitudinal, mixed-method study designs combining classroom observation, proficiency tests, and in-depth interviews would increase future study validity and richness.

Method

This is a case study design to investigate the use and perceptions of EMI in Libyan universities. The case study is particularly best suited to the investigation of intricate phenomena in real-world contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Simeonova & Fitzgerald, 2023), and for this research, it is best suited to provide a comprehensive analysis of how EMI is utilized, perceived, and assessed in different institutional environments. With the focus dispersed over several universities, the study achieves a richness of experience by policy at the local level, teacher training, and institutional agendas (Qiu et al., 2024). Qualitative focus achieves a richness of insight, offering a vivid description of the gap between EMI policy and classroom realities (Shepard, 2024). Quantitative elements in the form of Likert scale items enable patterns to be emergent, but qualitative data maintains the interpretative focus of the study, revealing participants' beliefs, motivations, and concerns (Qiu et al., 2024; Shepard, 2024). The study was carried out at the start of the spring semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, which was chosen as a strategic point when EMI practice will be revived and re-evaluated (Elbashir, 2024). This allows enactment to be traced along an active span of academic time, increasing the validity of findings. In this way, the design is not only able to obtain the variability of institutions that implement the EMI, but also allows analyses to be conducted with the help of the existing experience of the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Simeonova & Fitzgerald, 2023).

Participants

This research was carried out in ten Libyan public universities in different urban areas across Libya: Al Khums, Jawiya, Tarhuna, Misurata, Sabratha, Al Bayda, Sebha, Benghazi, Tripoli, and Ubari. The universities represent a wide geographical and institutional range, both coastal and internal areas, and various levels of infrastructural development and policy implementation of education. This diversity provided rich contextual ground to examine the nuances and local intricacies of EMI practice within Libyan universities. 30 university lecturers, all being the instructors of English Education faculties of the universities, were the targeted study subject (Table 1). Respondents were chosen on purposive grounds of direct engagement with teaching under EMI to ensure the recruitment of first-hand experienced instructors and relevant

pedagogical skills. This purposive sampling design enabled the researcher to gather informed opinions from those who were most immediately involved in EMI implementation, rather than reductive or presumptive comments. Choice also favoured representational diversity across Libya's urban academic settings, regarding the capture of range in institutional readiness, lecturer ability, and student populations. Respondents gave detailed feedback on pedagogic concerns, language issues, and institutional support and therefore enhanced a deeper understanding of EMI practices and made recommendations for the development of possible EMI policy and training in Libyan higher institutions.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Category	Subcategory	Participants	Percentage
Gender	Female	20	66.67%
	Male	10	33.33%
Age Group	30–40 years	13	43.33%
	40–50 years	10	33.33%
	50–60 years	7	23.33%
University Affiliation	Al-Mergib University	3	10.00%
	Al Zawiya University	3	10.00%
	Azzaytuna University	3	10.00%
	Misrata University	3	10.00%
	Sabratha University	3	10.00%
	Omar Al-Mukhtar University	3	10.00%
	Sabha University	3	10.00%
	University of Benghazi	3	10.00%
	University of Tripoli	3	10.00%
	Ubari University	3	10.00%
Qualifications	Master's Degree	15	50.00%
	Doctorate (PhD)	15	50.00%
Teaching Experience	5–10 years	10	33.33%
	10–15 years	7	23.33%
	16–20 years	4	13.33%
	20 years and above	9	30.00%

Data Collection

The information gathered using the internet-based survey was computed through a logical and step-by-step procedure to obtain depth and precision. The 12-item questionnaire, using closed-ended Likert scale items and open questions, allowed quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data from the Likert scale were cleaned out initially to remove incomplete or contradictory inputs to provide a clean dataset. Frequencies means, and standard deviations were computed to determine trends in respondent perceptions of EMI readiness, language difficulty, and institutional assessment practices. Descriptive statistics gave a preliminary idea of the respondents' attitudes and experiences. Qualitative open-ended responses were examined using thematic analysis. Open-ended responses were read several times, tagged for recurring themes, and categorized into significant clusters. The themes generated a richer comprehension of contextual issues, e.g., absence of institutional support, absence of training, and ongoing language concerns. To ensure rigor and validity, peer review was incorporated both during the coding and interpretation phases. Moreover, the analysis process was informed by expert-referenced standards of coding that were given at the instrument validation stage. This blending of quantitative and qualitative methods enabled the

triangulation possible to understand the results of the study could be made while making rich interpretations of the conceptualization, teaching, and assessment of EMI in Libyan higher learning institutions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study employed a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative types of analyses to obtain an educated knowledge of EMI application in Libyan universities. Closed-ended questionnaires were operationalized by employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. This allowed for the identification of overall trends in lecturers' attitudes toward the institution and individual preparedness for EMI, language issues at stake, and attitudes toward current assessment practice. For example, frequency measures and mean scores informed the extent of agreement or otherwise with EMI-instructional statements, such that points of strength (e.g., positive attitudes toward the purpose of EMI) and concern (e.g., lack of linguistic preparedness) were established. Standard deviations were used to report a range of responses, which indicated consensus or diversity between participants.

Thematic analysis was inductively coded into the open-ended responses. The responses were coded line-by-line as a way of bringing emergent themes and salient phrases into focus. Prominent themes like institutional limitations, compromise in instruction, code-switching behavior, and images of student participation emerged naturally from the data. Peer debriefing was employed in checking thematic interpretation on behalf of reliability so that themes represented collective realities rather than individualized dispositions. To enhance findings robustness, triangulation was achieved by comparing quantitative trends with qualitative themes. Intricate relationships—e.g., how perceived institutional readiness (quantitative) crossed with stated lacking support and training (qualitative)—thus supported the contextual depth of EMI dynamics in Libya in this integrative step.

Ethical principles were followed religiously during the study. Informed consent was used, where the participants were officially informed of the research intent, desire to participate, and ability to withdraw at any moment without incurring any consequences. Respondents' privacy was ensured through anonymization of the responses without any identifying information being gathered. There was a great deal of confidentiality, and the data was stored in a secure place where the researcher could access it. These precautions ensured adherence to ethics and helped those involved in trust and openness to respond.

Results

This section presents the findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative data collected from lecturers across ten Libyan public universities. The results are organized around three core themes aligned with the research questions: perceptions of EMI readiness, language and instructional barriers, and evaluation and improvement practices. Quantitative data are summarized using descriptive statistics, while qualitative insights are drawn from thematic analysis of open-ended responses. Together, these findings offer a comprehensive view of the current state of EMI implementation in Libyan higher education.

On the perceptions of readiness as measured in Question 1, the mean score of 3.20 represents some degree of agreement but remains close to the middle of the 'Neutral' category. The response distribution shows a significant division, with a third of respondents disagreeing (33.33% disagreeing) and a collective of 40% (26.67% Agree + 13.33% Strongly Agree). With a moderate dispersion of teachers' opinions, as shown by a standard deviation of 1.06 (Figure 1), there was no solid agreement amongst teachers about their own level of preparedness. This suggests that there is a portion of teachers who feel prepared, but a large number of teachers do not feel comfortable or are uncertain.

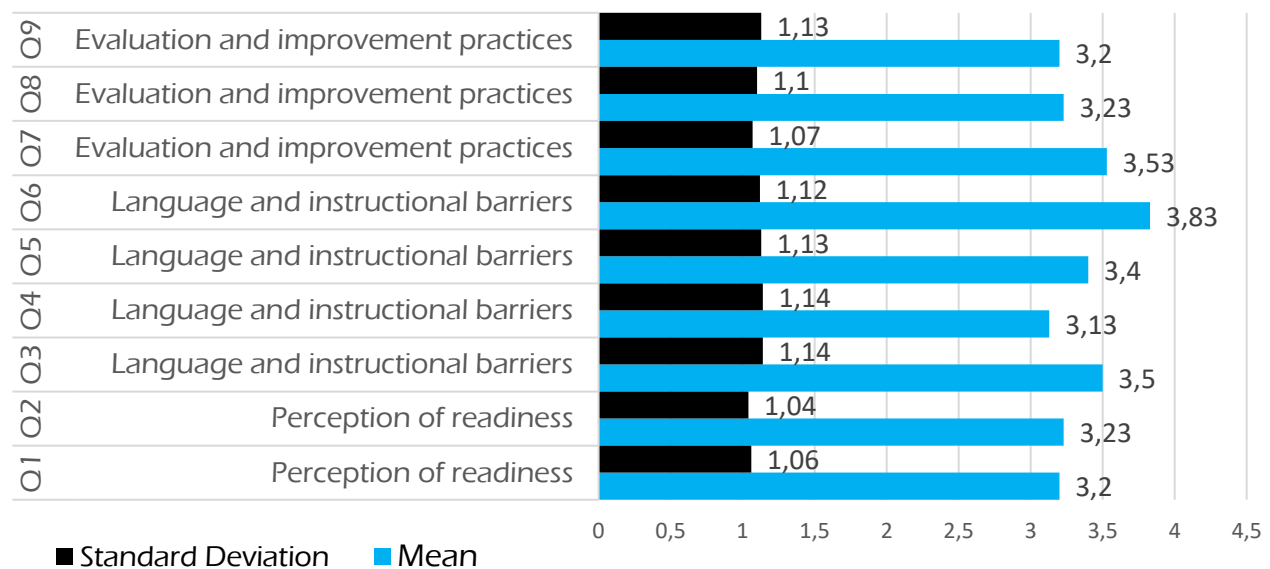


Figure 1. Overall Mean and Standard Deviations (Q1 – Q9)

Again, the second question related to readiness (Figure 2) provides very similar findings as Q1, with a Mean of 3.23. Split between 'Disagree' (30%) and 'Neutral' (30%) is the distribution of responses for 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree,' which totaled 40%. A standard deviation of 1.04 (Figure 1) supports this finding of moderate variation in responses. This is in line with the findings in Q1 that the teachers don't have a consistently strong sense of readiness. There is a very slight agreement, but a large segment of the teacher population does not feel prepared or does not care.

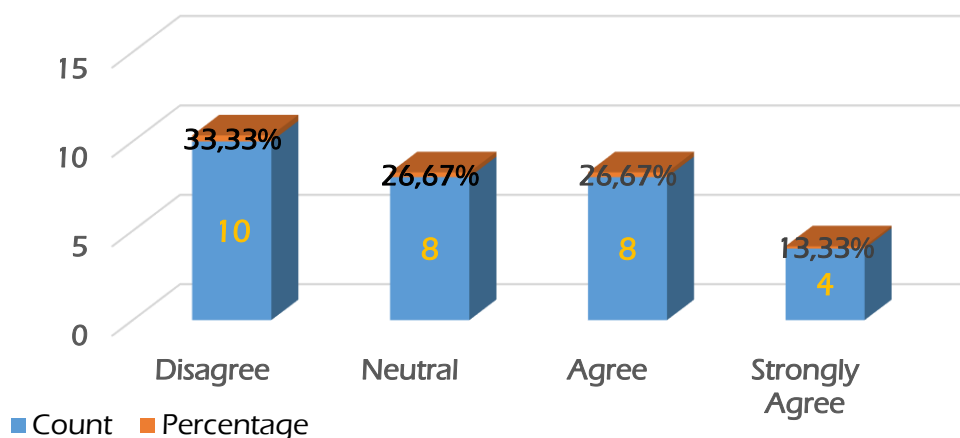


Figure 2. Institutional Readiness

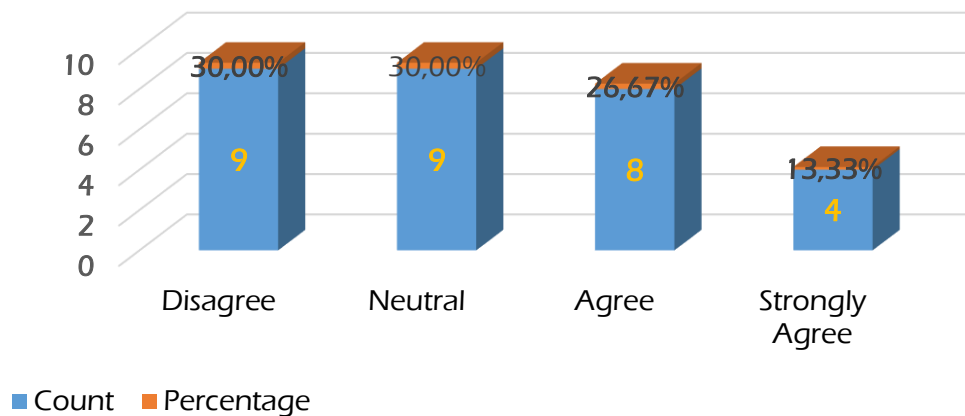


Figure 3. Individual Readiness

Language and Instructional Barriers

Q3, which aims at language and teaching barriers (Figure 4), averages 3.50, indicating a moderate level of agreement that there are the said barriers. A significant proportion of teachers (46.67% combined 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') recognize the said barriers. Nonetheless, 30% are 'Neutral', whereas 23.33% 'Disagree'. The standard deviation of 1.14 (Figure 1) shows quite a broad range of attitudes, which would imply that while a majority perceive barriers, there is also a considerable minority who either don't or are undecided. This demonstrates the significance of conducting further study to determine the exact characteristics of these perceived barriers.

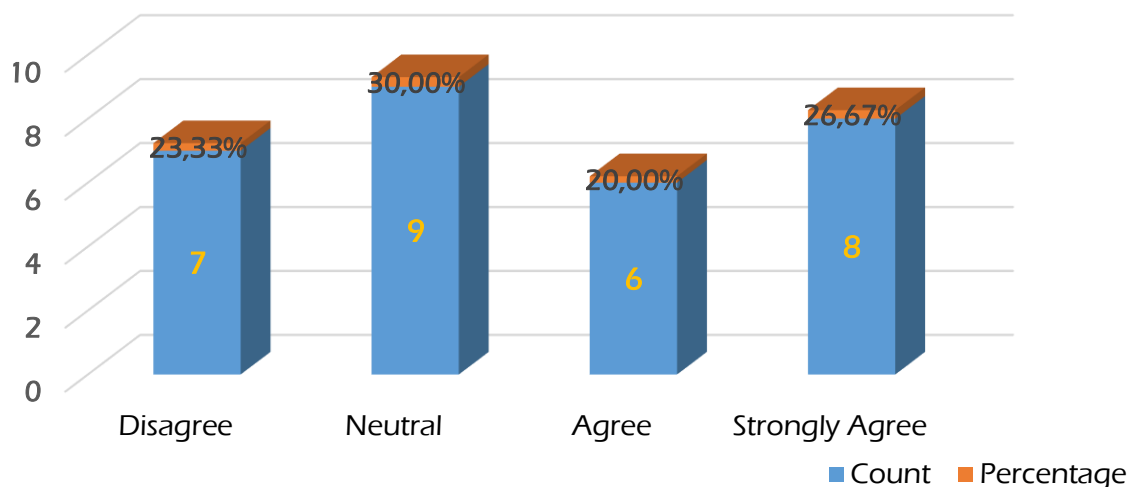


Figure 4. Students' Language-related challenges

The other question, Q4, on instructional and language barriers, shows (Figure 5) a mean score of 3.13 (Figure 1) but is closer to 'Neutral' than to 'Agree'. The percentage of responses was either 'Disagree' (36.67%) or 'Neutral' (33.33%). Only 30 percent overall 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'. The high dispersion of answers is once again supported by the standard deviation of

1.14 (Figure 1). This means that some barriers can be observed, but there is less consensus on the severity (or in the prevalence of a specific barrier discussed in Q4) than in Q3.

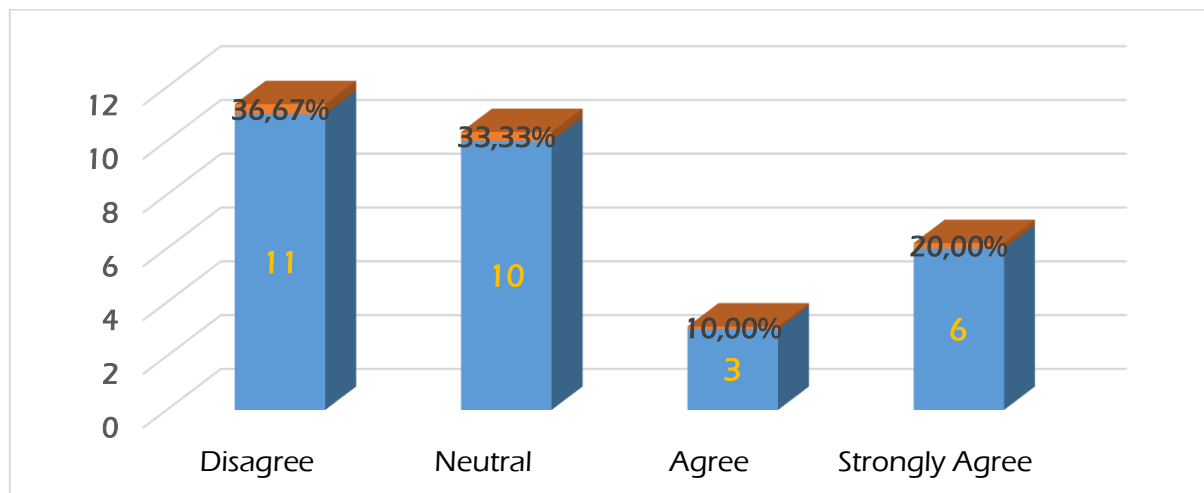


Figure 5. Instructional Barrier

In Q5, the mean score of 3.40 (Figure 1) falls in the 'Neutral' to 'Agree' category of language and instructional barriers (Figure 6). The responses are fairly distributed, with 30 percent saying 'Disagree', 20 percent saying 'Neutral', and 50 percent overall ('Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'). A standard deviation of 1.13 (Figure 1) means that there is much variability in opinions. This demonstrates that half of the teachers acknowledge that such barriers exist, but a significant proportion (30) do not agree, indicating different experiences or perceptions of the teaching faculty.

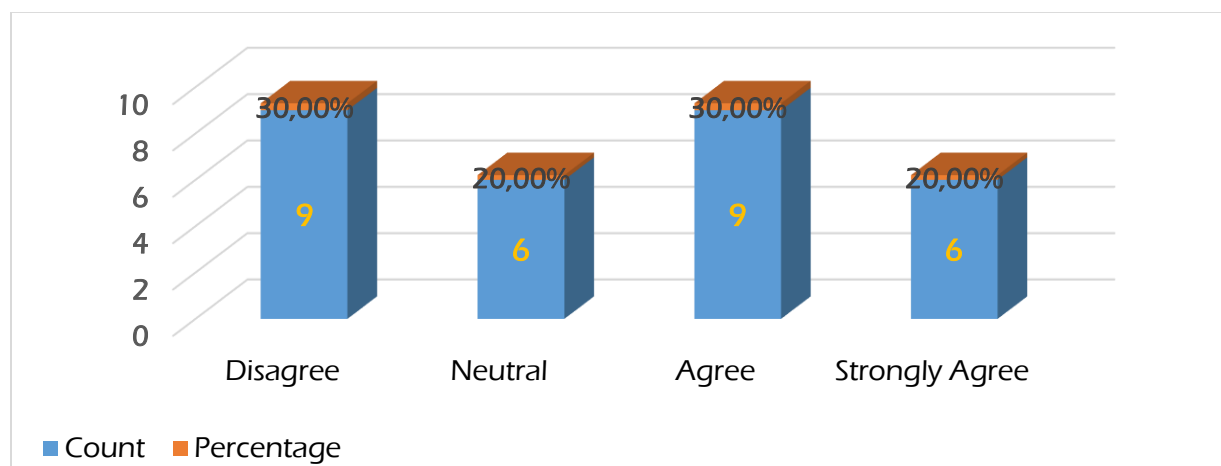


Figure 6. Contextual Classroom Practice

Q6, the last question in this set, has the highest average (3.83) (Figure 1), indicating greater support for the statement on language and teaching obstacles (Figure 7). Here is a high prevalence (63.34% combined 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') of these barriers. A tiny infinitesimal minority (16.67%) 'Disagree'. The standard deviation of 1.12 (Figure 1) suggests that although there is a highly strong directional bias towards agreement, there remains some spread of the

responses. This would imply that even where language and teaching barriers are commonly accepted, their effect may be inconsistent in all students.

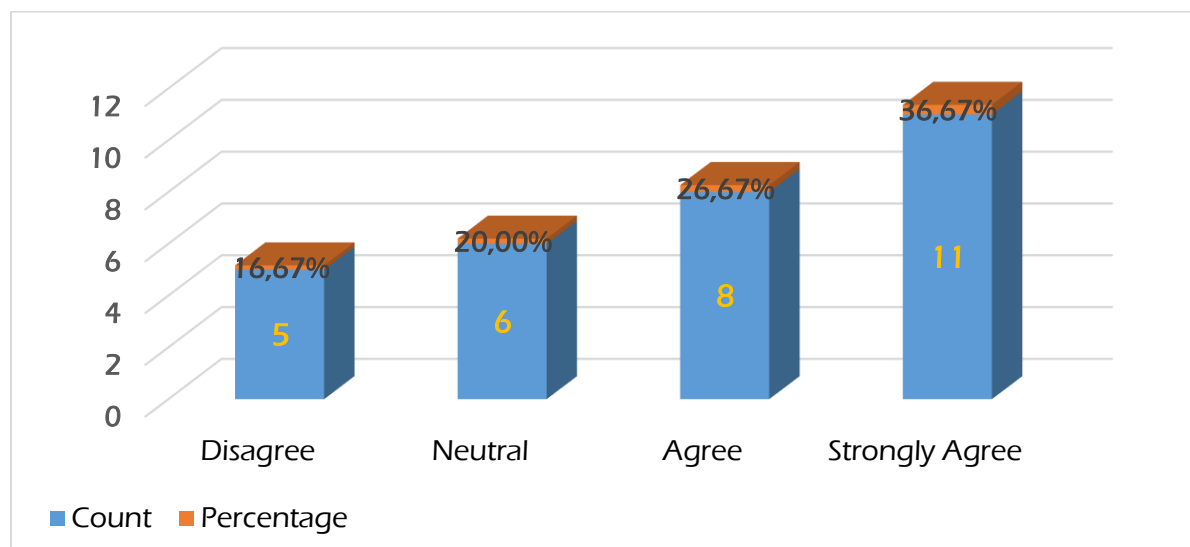


Figure 7. Language-related Barrier

Evaluation and Improvement Practices

For Q7, regarding the issue of evaluation and improvement practice (Figure 8), the 3.53 mean score (Figure 1) shows a measure of moderate agreement. Together, 56.67% of teachers 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the statement, and this may represent a positive general view of such practices. 23.33% 'Disagree', and 20% are 'Neutral'. The 1.07 standard deviation (Figure 1) shows a considerable spread of opinions. It does detect that most teachers are satisfied with existing evaluation and improvement practices, but there is a sizable presence that is not in favour or is undecided, and therefore cites areas of potential need for refinement.

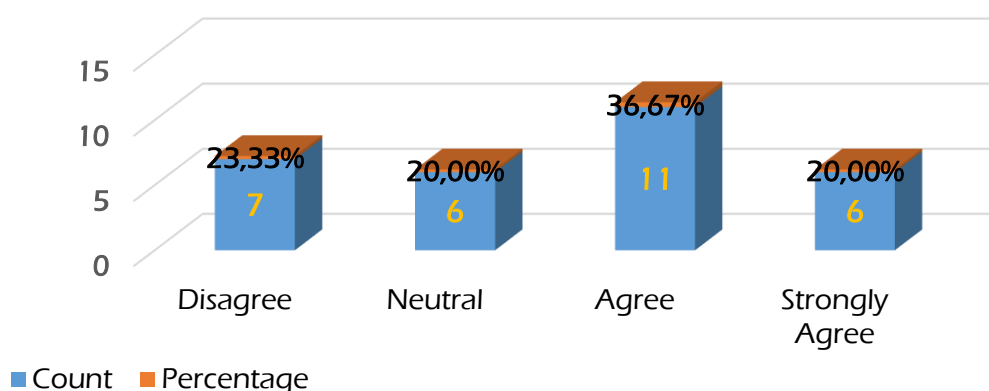


Figure 8. Evaluation of EMI

Q8, a question on evaluation and improvement practices (Figure 9), is rated with a mean of 3.23 (Figure 1), nearer to 'Neutral'. An extremely high percentage of teachers (36.67%) are still 'Neutral', and 30% 'Disagree'. Not more than 33.33% 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' together.

The 1.10 standard deviation (Figure 1) indicates a very high spread in the answers. This implies that there is no very high degree of agreement on the evaluation or improvement practice being discussed. Most teachers disagree or don't agree with the statement and show where such practices could be reconsidered or updated.

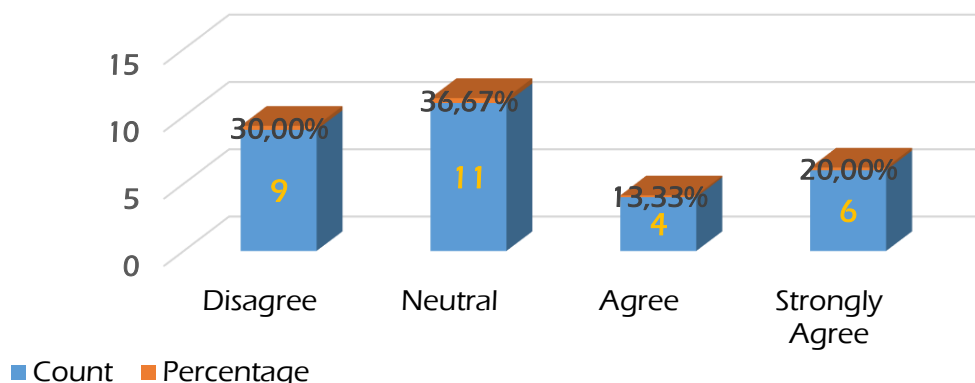


Figure 9. Evaluation and Improvement Practices

Q9, the final question in this section, also has a mean score of 3.20 (Figure 1) and is also close to 'Neutral' and close to Q8. 36.67% of the teachers 'Disagree', and 23.33% of them 'Neutral' (Figure 10). 40% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' together. The standard deviation of 1.13 (Figure 1) reflects the extremely high level of opinion variance. It suggests that a high proportion of teachers are not satisfied with the overall practice of evaluation and improvement as satisfactory or beneficial. There is an urgent need to address the issues outlined by the disagreement and neutralize them to heighten the perceived effectiveness of the practices.

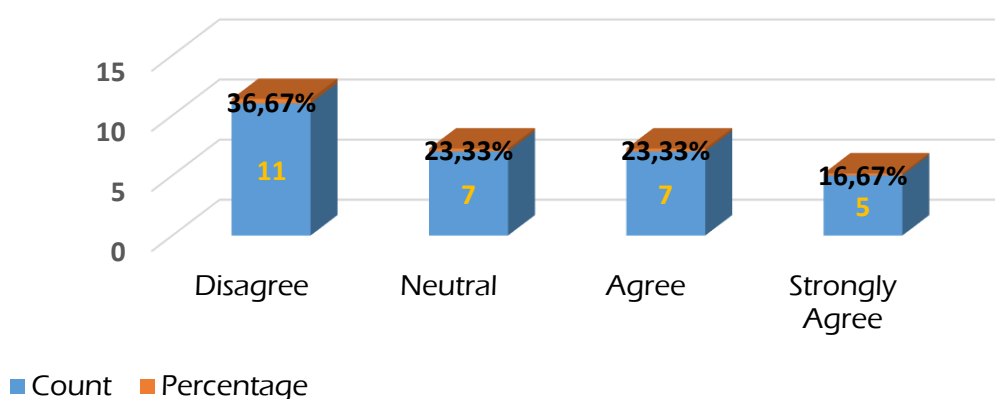


Figure 10. Strategic Planning for EMI Improvement

Challenges in EMI Implementation: Between Expectations and Reality

The feedback of lecturers from universities amply demonstrates that the introduction of EMI to Libyan higher education is a process fraught with gigantic challenges. Chief among them are language constraints, poor teacher training, and institutional resource deficiencies. One of the respondents said, *"Lack of student training and language skills is the most daunting*

challenge," a view shared by many. English language skills among students were identified as an isolated issue when technical and conceptual explanations were under discussion, leaving lecturers with no choice but to explain in Arabic. As another lecturer continued, *"We are compelled to explain important points in Arabic because the students cannot understand complex words through the use of English."* This habit of code-switching between English and Arabic is not pedagogy but exigence. To enable it to be understood, the lecturers have to improvise, which dilutes the meaning of EMI, but without that, there will be no survival in the classroom. *"EMI implementation feels hasty. There is pressure, but no system support or materials,"* opined one Respondent, highlighting how institutional enthusiasm towards EMI is not matched with strategic preparation.

Impact on Learning and Classroom Dynamics: Gains with Gaps

Responding to the impact of EMI on the learning achievements of learners and classroom interactions, the respondents provided an even split between hope and concern. Some observed improvements were found, especially for access to academic English and world subjects by students. According to one Respondent, *"Students are more interested in international issues, but are unable to write or communicate in English."* EMI seems to enrich the students' experience, familiarizing them with English media, broadening their eyes toward the international view, and academically exposing them to original speech. The results, however, are not equal for all students. Lower English users will step back from taking part. In a nutshell, as one teacher participant expounded, *"EMI has increased language exposure, but most students are still afraid to speak."* Another Respondent had similar views: *"Learning outcomes have improved somewhat, but classroom engagement is low."* It reflects a widening gap in the EMI classroom—where some students silently fall behind while others who possess the ability to converse in English benefit more. In addition, the absence of scaffolding and interactive approaches in EMI classes exacerbates the issue. The teachers have to deal with content delivery and language mediation without any system to mediate between the two. Thus, though EMI is fulfilling its symbolic function of staying connected with international tendencies, whether it acts as an effective education tool or not remains doubtful.

Suggestions for Improvement: Building a Foundation for EMI

The lecturers identified problems as well as offered solutions based on their regular professional lives. Most of the respondents highly supported ongoing professional development specifically designed to compensate for EMI teaching. *"Have regular EMI workshops and English support classes for students,"* one Respondent suggested, emphasizing the significance of concurrent investment in students as well as instructors. Several lecturers also insisted on the formulation of clearly defined EMI policies with special attention to facts on the ground instead of far-off foreign aspirations. *"Put in place a systematic EMI policy and language training interventions among staff,"* one submission called for, insisting that institutions make things happen through EMI leadership beyond rhetoric. Material support was also high on the agenda with demands for textbooks, web materials, and English glossaries specific to the discipline. *"Provide easier access to teaching materials and stop relying on translation,"* one lecturer commented, indicating the reliance on spontaneous instructional materials because of institutional deficiency. These are insights pointing to a faculty not hostile to EMI, but anxious to be given something worthwhile. The EMI vision is not straightforward, but its implementation is.

The qualitative responses create a vivid picture of EMI as a two-sided sword in Libyan higher education-promising, yet tainted with management follies. Lecturers recognize the advantage of EMI in building the prospects of students and the internationalization of academic excellence. They also state crucial requirements: preparation, equipment, and realistic policies that suit their environment. As one of the respondents pragmatically put it, *"We need more than*

policy—we need preparation, practice, and support." Such calls should not be construed as whining but as sound feedback to an enhanced, better-balanced, and more successful EMI deployment strategy.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

To robust understanding of EMI practice in Libya, this study used a case study design with both quantitative and qualitative data. Integration was achieved at the interpretative stage through the combined display approach, contrasting quantitative tendencies (from Likert-scale items Q1–Q9) with emergent qualitative themes (from open-ended items Q10–Q12). This allowed for a more detailed, contextualized investigation of lecturers' perceptions and experiences.

Combined Interpretation Framework and Integration Procedure

One of the crucial areas of convergence appeared to be the area of readiness. Quantitative results showed moderate institutional and individual readiness consensus based on the mean scores of 3.20 to 3.23 and high proportions of respondents selecting the response of 3.20 as 'Neutral' or 'Disagree'. This was backed up by qualitative data, where many lecturers indicated that EMI was introduced without much preparation or guidelines. One of them stated, *"EMI implementation feels hasty. There is pressure, yet no system support or resources."* This overlap confirms the contention that institutional interest in EMI precedes infrastructural and pedagogical readiness. The second proximal alignment was within language-related barriers. Q6 registered the highest mean score (3.83) for the acknowledgment of language difficulties being pervasive. Qualitative feedback supported it by pinpointing student discomfort and lack of English proficiency as overarching themes. In the words of one lecturer, *"Students are more interested in international issues, but are unable to write or communicate in English."* Both sets of data validate that language proficiency is a powerful and pervasive difficulty in EMI settings.

Divergence and Explanatory Insights

There was no consensus on feedback and evaluation channels (Q7–Q9). Quantitative findings indicated moderate to neutral consensus since mean scores varied between 3.20–3.53 with large standard deviations, indicating no consensus. Qualitative feedback was more robust, however. Numerous lecturers criticized the lack of coherent, actionable feedback channels and ongoing EMI evaluation procedures. A participant stated, *"We need more than policy—we need preparation, practice, and support."* This again suggests that even if technical evaluations exist, they are not necessarily perceived to have much impact, and qualitative data makes this contrast more starkly than the statistics. As the moderate mean (3.40) of Q5 indicated, code-switching frequency, qualitative response gave it out as a survival strategy, rather than a premeditated teaching method. Frequency versus purpose or reason (quantitative versus qualitative) represents the worth of qualitative interpretation in deducing ambiguous numerical findings.

The aggregate results (Table 2) indicate categorical inconsistency between EMI policy-level plans and the in-practice of Libyan tertiary education. Despite moderate agreement on preparation and examination practices reported by quantitative results, qualitative results report a lack of administrative assistance, unorganized application, and pedagogical instruction. Strong quantitative findings on language-related challenges substantiate lecturers' anxieties regarding student proficiency and code-switching reality. Notably, the evaluation systems are viewed as being in place but not functional, highlighting a significant gap between formal processes and usefulness in practice. Together, the findings demonstrate the significance of context-sensitive EMI policies grounded in both policy and practice.

Table 2. Integrated Findings

Theme	Quantitative Result	Qualitative Support
Institutional Readiness (Q1,Q2)	Mean: 3.20–3.23; Mixed responses	"No support or materials... Implementation feels hasty."
Student Language Barriers (Q3, Q6)	Mean: 3.50, 3.83; High agreement	"Most students are still afraid to speak."
Code-switching (Q5)	Mean: 3.40; Wide spread of responses	"We explain in Arabic because students can't grasp concepts in English."
Evaluation Practices (Q7–Q9)	Mean: 3.20–3.53; High variability	"There is no effective feedback mechanism or policy for EMI improvement."

Holistic Comprehension by Mixed Methods

This case study design, involving both quantitative and qualitative data by way of triangulating the results, revealed hidden attributes of the EMI implementation. Quantitative results provided broad lines, and qualitative results provided context, emotion, and professional opinion to those trends. This combination showed that, on paper, EMI is highly acceptable, but, practically, it is limited by systemic influences, such as inadequate training, inadequate testing, and inadequate student language preparedness. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data proved crucial in moving beyond the surface-level measures of agreement/disagreement so that the study could discover why the respondents answered the way they did and what institutional issues lie underneath the surface.

Discussion

This study investigated Libyan higher education teachers' views on EMI readiness. Although current research has investigated the spread of EMI within non-English-speaking contexts, fewer studies (Macaro et al., 2018; Dearden & Macaro et al., 2016) have closely investigated how frontline teachers in under-researched contexts such as North Africa negotiate the everyday realities of EMI policy, practice, and student preparedness. The Libyan empirical research gap—where EMI is politically promoted but pedagogically under-resourced—justified this mixed-method study. The results revealed EMI readiness perceptions as moderate yet polarized. Quantitatively, institutional and individual readiness mean scores of between 3.20 to 3.23 with enormous standard deviations show irregular levels of preparedness. The same percentages are reflected in qualitative reports in which lecturers described EMI as "hasty" and lacking in "system support or materials". Though not all respondents expressed such pessimistic views, some described significant gaps in policy, provision of resources, and training—confirming an unequal EMI environment.

As for lecturer preparedness and perceptions of EMI readiness in Libyan higher education, the most widely recognized concern was language problems. Question 6, which measured the language and pedagogical issues, had the highest mean score (3.83). This is consistent with qualitative results mentioning student shyness to speak English and code-switching as an adaptation strategy for teachers—results replicated in global EMI studies (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012; Galloway & Rose, 2021). One respondent explained, "*Students are interested in international issues, but are unable to write or communicate in English,*" once again

repeating how language unpreparedness nullifies the pedagogical promise of EMI. Triangulating the findings, the study draws a more polished image of EMI in Libya: a policy that is well accepted in theory, but unevenly implemented in reality. Compared to the conditions of a safe level of English proficiency (e.g., the Netherlands), Libyan EMI remains limited by the shortcomings of the system, continuing to require a localized, context-dependent methodology (Dafouz & Smit, 2020).

The findings demonstrate that teaching and language issues are gigantic concerns for EMI facilitation in universities in Libya. Quantitative data demonstrate overwhelming agreement on the linguistic concerns, most saliently in Q6, where the highest mean (3.83) indicates lecturers' awareness of how students' low English level impedes participation. This is added by qualitative responses where lecturers often note that students are reluctant to talk and must resort to code-switching as a coping mechanism. It was stated by one of the Respondents, "*We need to explain important points in Arabic because students cannot understand challenging words using English.*" This aligns with Galloway and Rose (2021), who argue that low language proficiency is the most long-standing difficulty in EMI environments, especially in EFL environments. The results are also aligned with Macaro et al.'s (2018) model of EMI, recognizing language capacity, teacher preparation, and instructional adaptation as the three pillars of success. In the Libyan case, however, lecturers report less institutional support and training, unlike other contexts, like in Europe, where EMI is supported by the planned development of pedagogy (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012). While code-switching is stigmatized in purist EMI models, scholars such as Lin (2015) advocate for its strategic use in multilingual classrooms. In this way, the current study highlights the significance of a local EMI model that takes into account linguistic diversity and responds to instructional variation with the support of scaffolds.

Assessment and Libyan university EMI practice development are characterized as patchy and irregular. Quantitative answers to Q7–Q9 showed higher means (3.20–3.53) but high standard deviations, a sign of colossal variation in EMI assessment perception and institutional plans. Qualitative answers supported this by showing dissatisfaction with assessment procedures habitually euphemized as shallow or unproductive. According to one of the Respondents, "*There is no working mechanism of feedback or policy for EMI improvement;*" i.e., there are government departments, but they don't function efficiently. This contradiction indicates a more general complaint raised by Dearden and Macaro et al. (2016) according to which, without systematic evaluation and responsive policy reformulation, EMI can be performative, not transformative. In contrast, other nations such as Sweden and the Netherlands introduce EMI within strong quality assurance systems that include feedback loops to facilitate curriculum development and staff development (Smit & Dafouz, 2012). The absence of such a cycle in Libya is employed here to highlight the gap between EMI policy rhetoric and practice. Furthermore, the lack of open, formative feedback is contrary to best pedagogical practice, especially Black and Wiliam's (2009) model of formative assessment, insofar as it promotes ongoing, actionable feedback in teaching development. Without internal, context-dependent assessment practices, then, EMI in Libya is susceptible to shallow implementation, nullifying its intended learning results.

Implications

Implications of the findings from this study are substantial at the theoretical, practical, and policy levels in Libyan EFL EMI environments. Theoretically, the current study affirms Macaro et al.'s (2018) model of EMI via reassertion of pedagogical flexibility, interdependent language ability, and institution-level preparedness. The variation in the lecturers' response justifies redressing EMI as a responsive, adaptive pedagogical approach (Smit & Dafouz, 2012). The research immediately identifies the institutional failings. Systematic staff training in EMI,

language support in the classroom, and multilingual resources on hand in the classroom are called for. Since lecturers claimed to employ code-switching because students failed to understand, this need not be interpreted as a failure but as a short-term coping strategy in multilingual teaching (Lin, 2015). Policy implications are also crucial. Libyan EMI policy is ambitious but operationally opaque. Policymakers must go beyond symbolic adoption and adopt evaluative frameworks, feedback systems, and longitudinal tracking of performance (Dearden & Macaro et al., 2016). To optimize EMI effectiveness, institutions need to act locally: scaffold content with first-language support, offer discipline-specific English resources, and engage in long-term teacher development. Curriculum developers need to integrate EMI into institutional language policies and align teaching aims with language realities.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study, while critically adding to EMI policy implementation in Libyan higher education, is not without limitations. Firstly, while the sample of 30 lecturers was as purposively drawn as it could be in-depth, it may not be representative of the greater variability of EMI practice within all Libyan universities. This limits the generalizability of the research. Follow-up studies need to use larger, more diverse samples, even with opinions from various academic disciplines and geographies, in a bid to capture a broader range of EMI issues and solutions (Macaro et al., 2018). Second, the research was based on questionnaires' self-reported data and therefore, will generate potential bias, mostly social desirability bias, in the sense that Respondents overstate institutional readiness or understate their challenges (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). In future research, triangulating classroom observation, students' self-reports, and performance tests could provide a more objective, triangulated picture of EMI dynamics.

Third, since the quantitative results were supplemented by qualitative analysis, the missing longitudinal data is that the study cannot examine how the perception of lecturers or how institutional practices change over time. Future studies can be conducted by a longitudinal mixed methods study to determine the time-varying concerns, readiness, and EMI effects and in particular when training and policy changes are implemented (Smit & Dafouz, 2012). Finally, there were no measurements of student outcomes or attitudes in the study, which is crucial to conclusively assess the effectiveness of EMI. Further research should incorporate the views of students, specifically language skills acquisition, class participation, and comprehension of materials (Galloway & Rose, 2021). Having an answer to these limitations, future studies can make more holistic, evidence-based suggestions for EMI implementation in Libya and other such multilingual, resource-constrained contexts.

Conclusion

This study corroborated that Libyan higher education lecturers view EMI readiness as unbalanced and insufficiently supported. It also verified that language- and instruction-related difficulties significantly detract from the feasibility of EMI, and existing evaluation frameworks are not effective and clear-cut. The study therefore confirmed that EMI in Libya is being introduced in a context of deprived institutional preparation, narrow linguistic coverage, and reduced pedagogic support—potentially seriously eroding its envisioned educational benefits. Results showed that although a few members of the faculty had moderate confidence in EMI practice, the overwhelming majority indicated areas of no training, low English proficiency of students, and excessive code-switching reliance. The majority also attributed this to the lack of institutionalized assessment and feedback mechanisms. All these findings are in accordance with international studies indicating that EMI implementation in various EFL environments is tainted by top-down policymaking devoid of appropriate pedagogical support (Macaro et al., 2018; Smit & Dafouz, 2012).

The study contributes theoretically to EMI research by reiterating the necessity for context-sensitive models that balance disciplinary and language acquisition knowledge. At a practical level, it reaffirms the necessity for local provision, piloting, and training of materials. Limitations, such as small sample size, self-reporting, and absence of student voice, preclude generalizability to a broader population. Follow-up research would be required to provide a longitudinal and multi-stakeholder perspective on the long-term impacts of EMI. Despite its limitations, however, this research provides a much-needed foundation for imagining the multidimensionality of EMI in Libya and other multilingual contexts. Eventually, the present study argues that successful EMI has to be more than policy—indeed, it should be a pedagogically led, linguistically responsive, and institutionally supported educational practice.

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Disclosure Statement

The author hereby declares that research ethics and citation principles have been considered in all stages of this paper. The researcher of this study takes full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of a dispute. The author confirms that the manuscript was created by the author and not an AI tool or a large Language Model (LLM).

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no competing financial or non-financial interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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