
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teacher Creativity under Institutional Constraints: Teaching Public Speaking in Moroccan EMI University Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking has become an important part of instruction in contexts where English is used as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). However, Moroccan higher education does not always offer speaking as a separate course, and its integration is often subjected to institutional constraints such as large class sizes, mixed levels of English proficiency, limited instructional time, and limited EMI-specific pedagogical support. This conceptual paper discusses these challenges and argues that teacher creativity can significantly create meaningful speaking opportunities even under existing constraints. Based on the literature on EMI, public speaking, and teacher creativity, it proposes a framework of adaptive pedagogical strategies organized around three main dimensions: managing institutional constraints, supporting students, and enhancing learning. It contributes to the discussion about public speaking instruction in Moroccan EMI classrooms and offers directions for future research and classroom practice.

KEYWORDS

English-Medium Instruction (EMI); Public Speaking; Teacher Creativity; Moroccan Higher Education; Adaptive Pedagogical Strategies.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, English has become a major language of education, research, technology, and international communication. This has led to a growing trend of English-Medium Instruction in many higher education systems across the globe including Morocco (Crystal, 2003; Dearden, 2014). In Morocco specifically, there is an increasing interest in the use of English due to its perceived value academically and professionally as well as its function in granting students more access to opportunities on an international scale (Belhiah 2022; Chihab et al., 2024). At the same time university students are being more and more required to express their thoughts clearly, engage in discussions and communicate well in English which makes effective oral communication an increasingly important part of EMI contexts (Huiling & Ismail 2022; Oubedda & Koumachi 2025).

However public speaking has not yet been integrated fully into Moroccan EMI classrooms due to various institutional and pedagogical challenges related to teacher preparation, conditions for instruction and classroom practices (Belhiah 2022; Anaam & Kerouad 2024; Oubedda & Koumachi 2025).

Although existing research has revealed the challenges and discussed issues about the implementation of EMI, teacher preparation, and speaking practice within the Moroccan context (Belhiah, 2022; Anaam & Kerouad, 2024; Chihab et al., 2024; Oubedda & Koumachi, 2025), there has been limited focus placed on how teachers might negotiate such constraints through their day-to-day

practices in the classroom. This paper seeks to propose a framework of adaptive pedagogical strategies that may be adapted by teachers to suit their particular classroom contexts.

1.1 Research question

This paper will be framed around the following research question: How can teachers creatively integrate public speaking instruction into Moroccan EMI University classrooms despite institutional constraints?

1.2 Objective

The current paper is a conceptual one and, therefore, does not engage with empirical data. Rather, it describes the institutional constraints that shape public speaking instruction in Moroccan EMI University classrooms and proposes a theoretically grounded framework of adaptive pedagogical strategies that can support meaningful public speaking instruction despite these constraints.

1.3 Contribution

This paper adds to the discussion about public speaking in Moroccan EMI classrooms by suggesting a realistic framework of flexible teaching strategies that teachers can tailor to their specific classroom situations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English-Medium Instruction in Morocco

Recent studies have shown that English-Medium Instruction is increasingly popularized in Morocco, signaling an increasing interest in the use of English as a language for higher education, research, and international relations. According to Belhiah (2022), the shift can be understood in terms of the academic and professional values attached to this language. Chihab et al. (2024) prove that these perceptions are mostly shared by students and university professors who usually manifest positive attitudes toward English as a language of instruction. It is from such studies that one can infer broad support for further expansion of EMI in Moroccan higher education.

Meanwhile, the literature indicates that positive attitudes are not enough for successful implementation. Anaam and Kerouad (2024) point out the necessity of sufficient teacher preparation and institutional support while also bringing to light the practical difficulties that come with EMI implementation. Rather than depicting EMI as a total success or a failed initiative, existing literature shows it as an educational project that is promising yet still developing; its effectiveness relies on careful planning, sustained support, and suitable pedagogical practices.

2.2 Public Speaking in EMI Contexts

Public speaking is at the heart of EMI contexts, where students engage in class discussions, give presentations, defend their ideas, and express their knowledge through English. These oral communication skills not only help with language but also enhance academic participation and learning experiences. Huiling and Ismail (2022) study international postgraduate students in Malaysia and stress the importance of academic speaking in EMI settings while revealing challenges related to language proficiency, communication, and class participation. The same issues are seen in Morocco as Oubedda and Koumachi (2025) report that speaking is understood as an important skill but often not given enough attention or meaningful practice opportunities in the classroom. Altogether, these studies imply that even though public speaking is considered very important for EMI, developing it effectively still poses a significant pedagogical challenge.

2.3 Institutional Constraints in Moroccan EMI Classrooms

While English-Medium Instruction keeps growing in Morocco, its execution happens inside organizational settings that show major difficulties for both educators and learners. Studies so far indicate that these problems go beyond fluency in language to involve matters of teacher readiness, teaching support, and institutional capacity.

Belhiah (2022) states that the implementation of EMI in Morocco should be undertaken with adequate planning and sufficient institutional support. Anaam and Kerouad (2024) have similar views on this matter by asserting that positive attitudes toward English are not enough for the successful implementation of EMI; there is a need for proper teacher preparation and professional development.

Recent studies add weight to these concerns. Razkane, Ben Hammou, and Sayeh (2025) find that university students see teachers who are not adequately prepared as a major obstacle to EMI implementation and specifically call for teacher training tailored to EMI and more robust language support mechanisms.

From the perspective of teaching speaking, Oubedda and Koumachi (2025) revealed that despite the fact that teachers, students, and supervisors acknowledge the significance of speaking skills, classroom practices do not contribute to oral proficiency due to insufficient teacher training and lack of speaking-oriented activities in curricula and textbooks.

In conclusion, the studies suggest that Moroccan EMI classrooms do not face a major challenge in realizing the importance of English or public speaking but rather deal with institutional and pedagogical conditions under which they function. Knowing these constraints is crucial to understanding how teacher creativity could be an adaptive response in such resource-constrained educational contexts.

2.4 Teacher Creativity as an Adaptive Response to Institutional Constraints

The institutional and pedagogical constraints discussed in the previous section should not be seen as obstacles to effective teaching, but rather as underscoring the significance of teacher creativity as a practical and response to classroom realities. In educational settings with limited resources, creativity does not only involve the production of original ideas or innovative activities but also encompasses teachers' capacity to modify their instructional practices in order to accommodate the needs of students while operating under pre-existing institutional constraints.

Recent studies increasingly depict teacher creativity as a reflective and contextual process rather than an individual talent or trait. Ahsanu et al. (2025) argue that creative teaching is a product of continual reflection by teachers on their practices in the classroom and their ability to respond flexibly to the local context, the characteristics of learners, and the resources available. In this view, creativity is more aligned with adaptation, responsiveness, and informed pedagogical decision-making than with novelty.

Wang, Yuan, and De Costa (2025) likewise point out that EMI teacher development is a dynamic and socially situated process shaped by institutional environments, professional learning opportunities, and teachers' own experiences. Their review makes it clear that effective EMI teaching involves ongoing pedagogical development and practices sensitive to the context rather than the straightforward application of predetermined methods. This perspective aligns with the view that teachers actively interpret and adapt pedagogical approaches to the realities of their classrooms.

When combined, these viewpoints imply that teacher creativity should be seen as an adaptive pedagogical practice that allows teachers to react positively to those institutional constraints. Based on this idea, the next section offers a framework of practical and theory-based strategies that can help teach public speaking effectively in English Medium Instruction classrooms at Moroccan universities.

3. Methodology

The present study is descriptive and conceptual in nature. It does not involve primary data collection through interviews, questionnaires, or classroom observations; instead, it reviews extant literature to identify the institutional constraints that impact public speaking teaching in Moroccan EMI University classrooms and to propose a framework of adaptive pedagogical strategies. According to Jaakkola (2020), conceptual research is about the analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge in order to develop new perspectives and theoretical insights.

This framework is based on a review and synthesis of Moroccan and international literature on English-Medium Instruction (EMI), public speaking, institutional constraints, teacher creativity, and adaptive pedagogy. Informed by Gilson and Goldberg's work (2015) and Jaakkola's work (2020), the paper attempts to unify these various perspectives in order to propose some practical ideas that might help teachers integrate meaningful public speaking activities into their instruction despite existing institutional constraints. It does not provide any empirical findings but rather seeks to organize existing knowledge so that it can be used for teaching practice as well as future research.

4. A Framework of Adaptive Pedagogical Strategies for Public Speaking in Moroccan EMI Classrooms

This paper presents a framework for adaptive teaching strategies that educators might employ in response to the actual realities of their classrooms. The framework synthesizes empirical research findings into three categories: Managing institutional constraints, supporting students, and Enhancing learning. These categories are interrelated and should not be considered mutually exclusive. Additionally, the framework is designed to be flexible and contextualized within specific classroom settings and pedagogical objectives.

Category	Strategies	Main Purpose
Managing Institutional Constraints	Micro-speaking activities; Group work	Address limited time, large classes, and participation challenges
Supporting Students	Scaffolding ; Translanguaging	Support language development and build confidence
Enhancing Learning	Real-life tasks; Peer feedback; Integration into content	Promote meaningful communication and active learning

4.1 Managing Institutional Constraints

The first category deals with strategies that help teachers respond to some typical institutional constraints, like limited class time and high student numbers, through flexible classroom practices that enhance participation.

4.1.1 Micro-speaking activities

Micro-speaking activities are short, focused oral tasks that give students frequent chances to produce spoken language in a limited time frame. These can take the form of one-minute talks, self-introducing, pair-work discussions, role-playing, and short presentations focusing on particular aspects of speaking performance (Assalamah, 2024). Studies have shown that these activities enhance participation and provide regular practice while gradually building learners' confidence to speak English. For instance, Retnaningsih et al.'s study (2025) indicated that the One-Minute Sharing (OMS) technique enhanced the students' speaking ability, motivation level as well as self-confidence. Their use is also in line with the learner-centered principles of Communicative Language Teaching which stress meaningful interaction and regular use of the language (Nunan, 1999; Richards, 2008).

4.1.2 Group work

Another practical strategy for overcoming institutional constraints in Moroccan EMI classrooms is the use of group work. When students work in pairs or small groups, they are provided with more opportunities to speak and engage actively in classroom activities. This allows them to exchange ideas, collaborate on problem-solving tasks, and practice using English in a more natural and interactive manner. Group work is particularly beneficial in large classes where individual interaction with the teacher may be challenging. Research has demonstrated that group work offers both academic and social support, enabling students to ask questions, explain concepts to each other, and learn collaboratively (Chang & Brickman, 2018). Furthermore, it aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching by promoting meaningful interaction and learning through communication (Long, 1996; Nunan, 1999).

4.2 Supporting Students

The second category deals with supporting students in their learning process through using appropriate strategies. Since most learners are likely to experience varying degrees of anxiety, lack of confidence in their speaking skills, and differing levels of English proficiency, teachers should use appropriate forms of support to help ease students into speaking and build their confidence.

4.2.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an important strategy for helping students in EMI classrooms, particularly those who are less confident or have lower English language proficiency. Scaffolding includes providing temporary support that enables students to carry out speaking tasks successfully and eventually become independent. This support can take the form of sentence starters, guiding questions, vocabulary lists, models of speaking, and visual prompts. Such practices help reduce anxiety among students and motivate them to take part more actively in class discussions and presentations. The idea of scaffolding comes from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which stresses the role of help and social interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In Moroccan EMI classrooms, scaffolding can assist students in enhancing their speaking abilities while slowly increasing their confidence to speak English.

4.2.2 Translanguaging

Translanguaging can be used as a temporary crutch for learners to improve their confidence in participating in the class, but English is still the primary language of instruction. In a multilingual environment such as Morocco, teachers may use the existing resources of the learners' languages to aid comprehension and enhance participation in classroom activities. Rather

than functioning as a replacement for English, translanguaging could be employed by teachers strategically whenever they deem it necessary to explain an abstract concept or instruction. Garcia and Wei (2014) assert that students should draw upon their linguistic resources to facilitate learning and communication. Research conducted within the Moroccan context confirms that teachers frequently resort to code-switching when attempting to clarify complex content or navigate the language challenges their students are experiencing (Aboul Majd et al., 2025).

4.3 Enhancing Learning

The last category contains strategies that make speaking activities more significant and engaging. Rather than isolating public speaking as a separate classroom task, these practices promote its integration into routine learning through real-life assignments, collaboration, and frequent opportunities for communication.

4.3.1 Authentic tasks

Real-life tasks allow learners to engage with English in relevant and practical contexts. Presentations, discussions, simulated scenarios, and other problem-based activities motivate students to use language for a specific communicative goal rather than merely practicing grammatical structures. Such tasks can enhance learners' speaking practices and support their development of linguistic as well as pragmatic competence. Furthermore, they align with the principles of task-based language teaching, which focus on learning through meaningful exchanges and authentic communication (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996).

4.3.2 Peer feedback

Peer feedback stimulates students' reflection on their speaking and learning from others. Giving and receiving constructive feedback makes students more engaged in the learning process and more aware of their speaking performance. It also fosters collaboration and ongoing improvement in a supportive classroom environment (Topping, 1998; Boud & Molloy, 2013).

4.3.3 Integration into content teaching

Public speaking need not be taught as a separate skill. It may be integrated into ordinary lessons through short talks, discussions, or any speaking task related to the subject matter being taught. This would enable students to develop their speaking skills while dealing with academic content and is in line with the principles of content and language integrated learning and the EMI approaches (Coyle et al., 2010; Macaro, 2018).

5. Discussion

This conceptual review posits that institutional constraints should not preclude meaningful public speaking instruction in Moroccan EMI classrooms. While such challenges as time constraints, large classroom sizes, and variation in students' English proficiency levels are still very much present, teachers may be able to generate opportunities for meaningful speaking by adapting their practices within the classroom.

The framework developed in this paper integrates practical strategies for addressing challenges, supporting students, and enhancing learning. It does not propose a prescriptive model but rather offers flexible strategies that can be tailored by teachers to different classroom contexts and student needs.

As this paper is of a conceptual nature, the framework presented has not been put to any practical test. Future studies may consider applying this framework in EMI classrooms in Morocco and assess its effects on the speaking ability of students as well as their participation in class.

6. Conclusion

Public speaking has gained greater importance in EMI classrooms in Morocco, but teachers are often constrained by institutional and pedagogical factors that make its integration difficult. This paper has argued that such constraints should not preclude meaningful instruction in speaking and has offered a framework of adaptive pedagogical strategies to help teachers in their classroom practice.

The proposed framework is at the conceptual stage and requires empirical validation; however, it offers a springboard for subsequent research as well as potentially contributing toward current attempts to enhance public speaking instruction within Moroccan EMI contexts.

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