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ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION: CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CHALLENGES

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Abstract. Globalization has had a tremendous impact on tertiary education all over the world, prompting many universities in non-native English-speaking countries to develop strategies aimed at raising the quality of the education they offer and increasing their market presence in the international education arena, with English Medium Instruction (EMI) becoming the driving force of internationalization and a prevalent phenomenon in tertiary education. There is irrefutable evidence that English Medium Instruction (EMI) is now a global phenomenon. For the EMI to be successfully implemented at a university both the administration and faculty should be aware of the challenges that international students experience. The challenges have been extensively studied in the literature though there is not a comprehensive classification of EMI challenges. The aim of our study is to analyze the literature on EMI challenges of international students and define the main categories of these challenges. The critical analysis of the literature revealed that the challenges of international students that study at EMI programmes can be divided into four main clusters: linguistic, academic, cultural and social ones. The results of the research can be used to develop language policy of the university and design measures to facilitate international students' adaptation to a new academic environment. Further research is needed to compare the EMI challenges found in the literature with the challenges that experience international students studying at a Russian university.

Keywords: higher education, international students, English Medium Instruction, challenges, classification of challenges

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ОБУЧЕНИЕ СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫМ ПРЕДМЕТАМ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: КЛАССИФИКАЦИЯ ТРУДНОСТЕЙ ИНОСТРАННЫХ СТУДЕНТОВ

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Аннотация. Глобализация оказала огромное влияние на высшее образование во всем мире, побудив многие университеты в странах, для которых английский язык не является государственным, разработать стратегии, направленные на повышение качества образования и расширения своего влияния на международном рынке образовательных услуг англоязычных образовательных программ.

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Обучение специальным предметам на английском языке (English Medium Instruction) становится движущей силой интернационализации высшего образования. Более того, обучение специальным предметам на английском языке стало глобальным явлением. Для успешного внедрения ЕМІ в университете и администрация, и преподаватели должны осознавать трудности, с которыми сталкиваются иностранные студенты. Данные трудности были подробно изучены в научной литературе, хотя общей классификации трудностей иностранных студентов, которые обучаются на англоязычных образовательных программах, на данный момент не предложено. Целью нашего исследования является аналитический обзор научной литературы и эмпирических исследований, посвященных изучению трудностей иностранных студентов, обучающихся на англоязычных образовательных программах, и определение основных категорий этих трудностей. Критический анализ научной литературы показал, что трудности иностранных студентов, обучающихся на англоязычных программах, можно разделить на четыре категории: лингвистические, академические, культурные и социальные. В статье авторы дают содержательный анализ каждой категории. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы для разработки языковой политики университета и разработки мер по адаптации иностранных студентов к новой академической среде. В дальнейшем авторы планируют сравнить проблемы иностранных студентов, обучающихся на англоязычных программах, описанные в литературе, с проблемами, с которыми сталкиваются иностранные студенты, обучающиеся в российском университете.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, иностранные студенты, преподавание английского языка на среднем уровне, задачи, классификация задач

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Introduction

The number of European bachelor's and master's degree programs taught in English rose almost 1,115% between 2001 and 2014, from 725 to 8,089 [34, 36]. Russian HEI's offered about 3500 EMI programmes in 2021 and this number is growing. Researchers have identified the factors behind the growth of EMI, namely: the general European policy of promoting a multilingual Europe [14, 16]; the beneficial impacts of more intensive exposure to foreign languages through content teaching [23, 35]; the internationalisation of tertiary education; and the fear of being excluded from the global scientific and academic worlds unless courses are offered in English [9, p. 5].

In the European Union (EU), the sharp rise in EMI programmes in tertiary education can be attributed to the Bologna Process, a series of educational reforms supported by the Bologna Declaration in 1999 [10]. Eastern universities raise their standards of tertiary education and introduce EMI through several national programmes. In Japan, The Global 30 Project (2009–2014), Go Global Project (2012–2016), Top Global University Project (2014-present) aim to put 13 Japanese universities in the top 100 world-ranked universities, and 24 additional universities to develop Japan's globalised higher education profile [26]. In China, EMI policy is a key reform initiative to equip Chinese students with the necessary skills

to study abroad and to attract international students [14, 20].

In Russia, the main goal of EMI introduction is to internationalise higher education by increasing the academic mobility of students and staff, as well as by encouraging scholars from other countries to work at Russian universities, fostering collaboration and opening new research laboratories. At the national level, the Russian Ministry of Education supports innovative development and internationalisation of tertiary education through the “Priority 2030” Initiative launched in 2021. 2030 Initiative aims to raise the research and academic profiles of the leading Russian universities and to increase students' and staff academic mobility. Public Russian universities compete to become part of the programme and to obtain additional resources for their development. One of the criteria is the number of EMI programmes the university can offer to international students, therefore, the departments have to internationalise their education programmes and attract international students.

The problems that international students experience studying at EMI programmes worldwide have been under analysis for predominantly English-speaking countries, however, less is known about the challenges that are encountered by international students that study in Russia. Moreover, though the literature on international students'

challenges is vast less attention is paid to the development of a comprehensive classification of these challenges. Therefore, the study is focused on determining the challenges that international students experience while studying at EMI programmes. The intermediate aims of our research are: to study the notion of English Medium Instruction; to identify the challenges that experience international students that study at EMI education programmes worldwide; to make a classification of international students' challenges.

Methods and procedure

As challenges of international students at EMI education programmes have multidisciplinary nature, we searched education, applied linguistics, psychology and intercultural communication databases: for education we searched ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) database, for linguistics and intercultural communication, MLA (Modern Language Association), and for psychology PsycINFO. Moreover, Web of Science (Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) (2000 – present); and Scopus (Elsevier's abstract and citation database) (2000–2021) were searched.

To increase the relevance of the review selective journal searching was conducted on five journals in which relevant papers might be published (period from 2000 to 2021): Journal of International Students, International Journal of Language Education, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Language and Education, International Multilingual Research Journal.

From abstracts and papers available we identified the studies to be included in our review, according to the following selection criteria:

1. Research that provides a review of international students' challenges in different countries.
2. Research that reports on empirical data.
3. Research that review the literature in the field in contexts in which the instructional language is purely English.
4. Research where the level of education is a tertiary one.

Studies were excluded if they:

1. Describe CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) education.
2. Focus on English for academic purposes (EAP).
3. Analyze English for specific purposes (ESP) education programmes.

The keyword search yielded 125 studies for

possible inclusion. When the papers were selected we asked two external experts to choose or exclude the papers for analysis. After that we applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria to the papers chosen. Finally, we reduced this number considerably and had 35 studies for inclusion. Then the selected papers were analyzed to find the answers to the research questions:

1. What is the working definition of EMI?
2. What does research say about the challenges that international students that study at EMI education programmes experience?
3. How can these challenges be classified?

Results and Discussion

1.1. English Medium Instruction: definition

EMI first appeared as a strategy to respond to the challenge of internationalization, but it has become an effective tool to transform universities' teaching practices [23] and an instrument to attract international students.

Originally, EMI was defined as “The use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English” [13, p. 2]. Later E. Macaro [24] analyzed the definition and stated that it raises more questions than provides the researchers with a clear answer to the question what English Medium Instruction is. The definition is ambiguous as it doesn't clarify what kind of English is meant: English as Lingua Franca or English of a native speaker; it also does not state clearly if applied linguistics an EMI subject or not; and, finally, the definition does not take into account the numerous educational and cultural contexts that may influence how the EMI is implemented in a particular setting. In our research we will use the definition of EMI given by Dearden [13].

The concept of EMI should be distinguished from other concepts that are related to it, namely, Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Integrating Content and Language Learning in Higher Education (ICLHE), English Taught Programs (ETPs), English Medium Education (EME) and English Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings (EMEMUS). CLIL is a phenomenon that is widespread in primary and secondary education. It is largely rooted in the assumption that CLIL programs are “environments which provide opportunity for learning through acquisition rather than through explicit teaching” [12, p. 3]. CLIL has a dual focus as it aims to teach both language and content. In this sense

the term ICLHE is its counterpart as ICLHE is CLIL for tertiary education where the teachers are meant to teach both their subject and be facilitators in terms of language issues if their international students have language problems or low English language proficiency. However, in an EMI setting, English is seen as the language of instruction and as a tool to communicate subject matter, rather than as a subject itself. If we compare EMI with ETPs we should note that EMI is broader in meaning as the term ETPs or “English Taught Programmes” refer to the educational programs that are completely taught in English [36, p. 17] while EMI may have different forms. EMI programs may have 20%, 30% or 50% of subjects taught in English and the other subjects taught in a local language. Moreover, the university administration may introduce EMI courses for local students with the focus on improving English language proficiency. The policy on EMI implementation depends on a particular EMI setting and a particular university strategy. The terms EME and EMEMUS can be considered as the evolutionary ones for the concept of EMI. Originally being one of the strategies of internationalization EMI has later acquired additional educational value raising the quality of higher education and stimulating the academic staff rethink their teaching practice. Then the pivotal role of students in the education process and the introduction of the notion of learning into the EMI phenomenon have promoted the use of the term English Medium Education (EME). Furthermore, the multilingual view of teaching and learning in international contexts has led Dafouz & Smit [11] and Unterberger [35] to the coining of English-medium education in multilingual university settings (or EMEMUS). EMEMUS highlights the developing multilingual nature of higher education and focuses on English-medium instruction considering the specific role that English plays both as an academic language and the language of instruction. Therefore, EMI is a complex phenomenon that needs further examination and should be distinguished from synonymous concepts.

English has become the language of international communication, or ELF (English as Lingua Franca) and, what is more important, it has become the language of academia. The use of English facilitates knowledge exchange and dialogue among scientists and elevates the development of science [29, p. 196]. The use of English in teaching a subject at the graduate and postgra-

duate level also becomes a parameter of internationalization. In education context English is used not only for a subject course, but as a tool for gaining knowledge.

EMI is regarded by many non-English speaking countries as a privileged form of linguistic capital for developing advanced English skills, enhancing academic English literacy (reading and writing) and communication skills (speaking and listening) [27]. Moreover, for both international and local students the introduction of EMI into HE has become an efficient instrument to improve their English language proficiency and to move one step forward to the image of a global citizen. However, this has created added challenges for the EFL students who then must understand a second language just to comprehend the content being taught. These students are especially at a disadvantage when the content is given through a series of academic lectures [18]. Nevertheless, most of the EFL students consider EMI an opportunity to improve their English proficiency [18]. Thus, EMI is a leading trend in higher education aimed predominantly to attract international students and to raise the institution profile. EMI is here to stay and though both researchers and practitioners accept this trend EMI poses challenges for all the stakeholders.

1.2. Classification of EMI challenges of international students

A growing body of EMI research has been carried out to document the challenges encountered by international students in adjusting to the demands of EMI programmes [6, 8, 15, 22, 25, 28, 33, 37, 38]. Our purpose is to analyze the challenges of international students that study at EMI programmes throughout the world and classify them into groups.

Different groups of challenges are presented in Table 1. We can see from the table that the authors choose various basis for the classification of challenges. J. Khanal & U. Gaulee [22] classify challenges basing on the stages the international students go through while studying abroad. The authors divide the challenges into pre-departure, post-departure and post-study challenges. V. Womujuni [38] considers the challenges in terms of adjustment of international students to a new education and social environment.

As EMI education programmes depend on the language of instruction, namely, English, the researchers pay much attention to the language issues encountered by international students

Table 1

Challenges of international students at EMI programmes

	Authors	Challenges
1	V. Womujuni (2006)	Academic and social adjustment challenges, psychological and cultural adjustment challenges, financial adjustment challenges, housing adjustment challenges
2	T. Baklashova and A. Kazakov (2016)	<i>Academic challenges</i> (difficulties in interaction with teachers, isolation from classmates, language barrier, burden of parental expectations); <i>social challenges</i> (different communications models); <i>cultural challenges</i> (culture shock, biased attitude towards international students, different perception of time)
3	S. Ecochard and J. Fotheringham (2017)	<i>Academic challenges</i> (teaching practices and classroom dynamics, core traditions of learning and teaching, core values, academic language, unfamiliar assignments and assessment methods); <i>language challenges</i> (insufficient language proficiency, pace of spoken English, diversity of accents, unfamiliar use of colloquialisms, idioms and body language, assignment writing); <i>socio-cultural challenges</i> (navigation through a new city, finding accommodation, making a new circle of friends, use the local public transport system, join the healthcare system, adapt to the local food, weather and social conventions)
4	S. Majid, R. Balaji, M.P. Shivalini, A. Shibani (2017)	<i>Academic challenges</i> (low language proficiency, communication problems with faculty, classmates and university administrative staff, different accents of international students which may cause communication problems, different classroom environment and learning dynamics, and use of different pedagogical approaches as compared with home countries); <i>socio-cultural challenges</i> (limited social interaction, social isolation and loneliness, discrimination against international students); <i>psychological challenges</i> (a variety of stresses, living away from relatives, financial issues)
5	J. Khanal and U. Gaulee (2019)	<i>Pre-departure challenges</i> (obtaining accurate information about university, affordability of tuition fees with living expenses, preparation of visa documents); <i>post-departure challenges</i> (culture shock and racism, financial and psychological, academic); <i>post-study challenges</i> (uncertain future, immigration policies, reverse culture shock)
7	K.N. Tang (2020)	<i>Linguistic</i> (accented English of native lecturers, low comprehension of published academic literature); <i>cultural</i> (mismatch between the characteristics and expectations of students outside the country and those from within, cultural anxiety around EMI and an associated perceived superiority of instruction in English to the detriment of local languages); <i>structural</i> (insufficient number of EMI courses, insufficient support from academic staff, reluctance of academic staff to give EMI courses); <i>identity-related (institutional) challenges</i> (preoccupation around how EMI is perceived by the rest of the world seems to be a growing concern among higher education institutions)
8	J. Pun, X. Jin (2021)	Learning (academic) challenges, language challenges

and study them in detail. The linguistic challenges can be broadly divided into two main parts: low language proficiency of international students and not sufficient language proficiency of EMI teachers.

One potential reason for the language-related challenges stems from the insufficient levels of English language proficiency among students entering an EMI university from a first language (L1) medium school. Lower proficiency students express more linguistic challenges while academic language support is available before starting an EMI programme or while undertaking their classes [2, p. 4].

Another reason is that university administration does not pay sufficient attention to the entry

level of English of international students focusing more on the number of international students they attract than on the quality of their academic background and English language proficiency. "Many EMI programmes do have entry requirements demanding a certain level of English proficiency, but these are often not sufficient to ensure students have an adequate level of proficiency to tackle the academic content. A lack of English proficiency has been found to influence student performance in a number of ways" [17, p. 6]. Also, students face many challenges in EMI, where they are unable to comprehend published academic literature in the English language because of their insufficient English proficiency [33, p. 101]. Furthermore, English language pro-

iciency and mastering these skills have been distinguished as the main challenge in higher education [4, p. 362].

The third reason for the language issues to aggravate academic performance of international students as Al Zumor [5, p. 76] put this is that educators believe that their function is not to reinforce students comprehend English, which is the language of scientific content, but to supply or give content in English whether a student comprehends it or not.

Moreover, very often EMI academic staff cannot give appropriate support because of their own low English language proficiency. Whilst, “The limited English language skills of faculty and staff were feared to negatively impact not only the quality of education but also the international student experience. Not only faculty but also a variety of administrative staff from different units are in contact with international students during their time at the institution, making the English language skills of different groups of staff central to implementing EMI education programmes” [31, p. 19].

As there are EMI programmes both in non-native countries and in universities located in English-speaking countries, international students counter struggle to comprehend non-native lectures with accented English and content delivered as described by Hellekjaer [19] who discussed the comprehension of lectures in English-medium higher education. These linguistic challenges’ issues are confronted often by non-native students as they contest to comprehend the accented English of native educators and they have difficulties to comprehend lecture content delivered in English in general.

I. Aizawa and H. Rose [1, p. 1127] in their study of Iraq EMI academic environment provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence of a gap between EMI teachers’ desired level of English language proficiency and their actual proficiency, concluding that EMI implementation was challenging even for highly proficient teachers. Thus, “EMI educators should be equipped with fluent English communication skills, as well as professional knowledge in their disciplines and the pedagogical skills to provide effective scaffolding for both the content and language, and only when universities provide sufficient teaching resources can EMI educators receive the necessary professional development to meet students’ learning needs” [28, p. 16].

The second group of challenges that interna-

tional students encounter is closely interrelated with the linguistic ones. These are academic challenges under which we understand the difficulties that international students meet while learning in a new academic environment. Researchers point out the reasons for the academic challenges. The critical ones are considered to be different academic backgrounds of international students and EMI faculty, different attitudes to classroom participation, mismatch of teaching practices and classroom dynamics, unfamiliar assignments and assessment methods, different pedagogical approaches as compared with home countries, and lack of meta skills such as critical thinking and analytical skills [6, 7, 15, 25]. E. Sidonie [32, p. 102] indicates that the academic challenges confronting international students precisely stem from having to understand and adjust to these distinctions. Majid S. et al. [25, p. 225] note that “Academic challenges play a crucial role in the adjustment process of international students”.

Teaching practices and classroom dynamics – such as interactions between students, and between teacher and student – are very much country specific: in the UK for instance, dialogic practices prevail with expectations of students to participate in class. Therefore, for students transitioning into UK HEIs from abroad, the academic adjustment can be a difficult one, far more demanding than just displaying linguistic proficiency. It involves becoming aware of the dissonances mentioned above and adjusting subsequently to the academic expectations of UK HEIs. However, international students will usually reproduce the study strategies used in the home-country initially, based on their prior academic experience, resulting in poor or disappointing grades despite the efforts invested. “Different accents of international students may cause communication problems. Some international students avoid taking part in class discussions as they fear that instructors and local students may not be able to understand them or even make fun of their accent” [25, p. 225].

S. Ratna [30, p. 62] underlines the importance of three factors that can undermine academic performance of international students. They are vocabulary factor, behavior of speaking in English factor, and conventional culture and mother tongue-oriented factor. Vocabulary factor denotes that EFL students obtain difficulty to comprehend what others speak in English due to limited vocabulary. This limitation of vocabulary may lead to the situation where students have no moti-

vation to express themselves [3]. Second, the behavior of speaking English factor denotes that the students who do not have much experience of speaking English before will feel diffident and not convinced to speak English which leads to the refusal towards EMI. Feeling shyness belongs to suppression factor which can make difficulty in speaking. Third, conventional culture and mother tongue-oriented factor denotes that students are fearful of losing the national spirit and conventional culture because of talking English daily. Moreover, students who have the same mother tongue tend to employ it because it is simple and because students feel less exposed if they are talking using their mother tongue [30, p. 62]. Language as a tool, mediates the communication of knowledge, culture and social norms [18, p. 195].

The third group of challenges that meet international while studying abroad stem from cultural issues. Tang [33, p. 102] defines a cultural challenge as a mismatch between the characteristics and expectations of students outside the country and those from within. National character, customs and traditions, core values can be manifested in both students' and lecturers' behavior mostly subconsciously which may cause misunderstanding. In his research Tang [33] characterizes lecturers from different countries and points out that a lecturer from Britain might be accustomed to a teaching delivery style that is highly interactive while such a style is not considered the predominant dynamic in Thailand university classrooms where students prefer to be passive learners. So, some Japanese lecturers feel compelled to adjust their teaching style which in turn may affect the national ideology.

J. Khanal & U. Gaulee [22, p. 567] describe the cultural differences in learning styles and note that many Asian students follow the traditional lecture format and predominantly use memorization to obtain satisfied grades and passing exams.

Another big issue is culture shock that international students experience when they arrive to another country. The reasons can be numerous starting from social norms and behavior to food and fashion. The Russian authors T. Baklashova and A. Kazakov [6, p. 1827] report that the international students experienced culture shock due to differences in views and values. When entering into a new culture, they had to deal with different systems of values, models of communication, social communication norms and patterns of interpersonal relations.

The thing that contributes to misunderstanding between local and international students is the lack of awareness about other cultures. This gap is traditionally closed with stereotypes about national character and behavior. Thus, international students from Confucian cultures are sometimes stereotyped as procrastinators, uninterested, intentionally isolated, or sometimes even characterized as inactive learners that lack critical thinking skills [22, p. 567]. But this behavior stems from the national tradition to be timid and respectful to the professor that teachers you, and keep silence if you are not sure in your answer in order not to lose face in front of the audience of strangers.

Cultural anxiety around EMI and an associated perceived superiority of instruction in English lead to the detriment of local languages which seemed to occur particularly in countries that have experienced prior subjugation of domestic "minority" languages. For instance, the case of Flanders in Belgium, where Dutch was not recognized as an official language until 1930 and French dominated the scientific and cultural life for a century or more in that region. While there may be little evidence that EMI, in fact, is as pernicious as some seem to fear [21], the fear itself is indeed real and cannot be ignored.

As an international student from Iraq, I consider the study at a Russian university as an important and vital choice, because it gives me the opportunity to learn Russian culture, to widen my horizons and to learn new things. My culture gives me strong support to do this as the main values of Iraqi culture is respect and transparency, which makes Iraqi students adapt easily and integrate smoothly into Russian academic environment.

The fourth group of challenges that is spotted in the research literature is social challenges. These challenges can be combined or classified into different classes including social and economic ones. T. Baklashova and A. Kazakov [16, p. 1827] state that "international students encounter challenges not just at the university but also in their social life. They state that when international students encounter some social issues they have to behave using different communication patterns. There is a fundamental difference in the behavior of people in Russia and other countries when they take or give gifts. In Western culture, when you are presented a gift the etiquette rule is to open the gift instantly to show your delight and appreciation. Whilst, in the East people often do not open a gift in front of other people, so sometimes western conduct pattern causes

inconvenience to international students”. T. Baklashova and A. Kazakov [6] noted that international students encountered the cases of discrimination and favoritism in the pedagogical and social life. For instance, international students can be disregarded in extracurricular activities.

Being excluded from the social life international students may feel anxious and depressed. Many researchers highlight the problems of social isolation of international students. A large number of the international students face the problem of social isolation and loneliness which can result in stress, depression and anxiety [22, 25]. V. Womujuni [38, p. 87] in his research states that “International graduate students at Portland State University feel isolated within the larger student body. Little interaction occurs between these students and the other cultural groups”.

Thus, having analyzed the selected sources we can state that the majority of researchers single out linguistic, academic, cultural, and social challenges as the most common ones. In Table 2 the classification of challenges of international students is presented.

We distinguished four main groups of challenges: linguistic, academic, cultural and social ones. The content of the challenges is presented in the table.

Linguistic challenges can be divided into two subclasses: the first one describes the challenges of international students caused by their low proficiency in English; the second one embraces the challenges of academic staff that deliver EMI courses where the main reason remains the low English language proficiency of EMI lecturers. Still this reason is aggravated by the low awareness of the academic staff of the strategies they can use to support international students in their study in English.

Academic challenges stem mostly from different academic backgrounds of international students and academic staff that lead to a mismatch of expectations of both groups. In addition, academic challenges are closely related to the English language proficiency issues and they influence the academic success of international students increasing international students’ stress and anxiety. Cultural and social challenges of international students are inevitable because they arrive to a new place of living that is different from their home countries. Culture shock, different models of communication, difficulties with integration into the community may negatively influence the psychological state of international students and, as a result, may negatively affect learning outcomes.

Table 2

Classification of challenges of international students

	Group of challenges	Content of challenges
1	Linguistic challenges	Lack of language proficiency of students, lack of terminology, poor skills in making notes on lectures, difficulties in self-expression in discussions, difficulties in thought organization in English, difficulties in grammar structures’ usage in writing and speaking, difficulties in fulfilling written assignments Lack of language proficiency of EMI faculty, inadequate pace of spoken English, lack of lecturer’s language support for better lecture comprehension, foreign accent of EMI lecturers, unfamiliar use of colloquialisms, idioms and body language
2	Academic challenges	Mismatch of academic backgrounds of international students and EMI faculty, lack of critical reading skills of international students, lack of analytical skills, difficulties in interaction with teachers, isolation from classmates, mismatch of teaching practices and classroom dynamics, lack of academic language, unfamiliar assignments and assessment methods, use of different pedagogical approaches as compared with home countries, lack of career and counseling support
3	Cultural challenges	Culture shock, cultural adjustment challenges, biased attitude towards international students, mismatch between the characteristics and expectations of students outside the country and those from within, difficulties in integration with community
4	Social challenges	Different communication models, navigation through a new city, finding accommodation, making a new circle of friends, use of local public transport system, joining healthcare system, adaptation to the local food, weather and social conventions, limited social interaction, social isolation, problems in insurance health which make a stress on financial disposition

Conclusions

EMI is a leading trend in higher education aimed to attract international students and to raise an institution profile. The concept of EMI that is "The use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English" [13] should be distinguished from other concepts that are related to it, namely, Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Integrating Content and Language Learning in Higher Education (ICLHE), English Taught Programs (ETPs), English Medium Education (EME) and English Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings (EMEMUS).

To help international students to adapt to a new academic environment academic staff should be pre-trained and provide appropriate support to international students. To realize what kind of support international students need it is important to increase the awareness of the EMI academic staff in different kinds of challenges international students experience while studying in a foreign country. The body of research on

the challenges of international students states that all the challenges of international students can broadly be classified into four main groups: linguistic, academic, cultural and social ones.

These are the challenges that can partially be tackled by the administration of the university in order to support the international students and facilitate their learning in a foreign country. The host university can offer a pre-course training program for international students in Academic English and General English to support their language proficiency. Universities can organize seminars and workshops where international students can learn about the cultural traditions of a host country and some critical social norms to communicate effectively both in academic setting and extracurricular activities. Special courses in general English and on EMI strategies should be organized for the academic staff of the university to prepare the faculty to teach international students.

Further research is needed to compare the challenges revealed in the literature with the challenges that encounter international students studying at EMI education programmes in Russia.

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