

VII International Forum on Teacher Education

European Concepts in EMI Introduction: Comparative Analysis of Egypt and Russia

Dilyana D. Sungatullina* (a), Lubna Shehab (b), Yuliya N. Gorelova (c), Oksana V. Polyakova (d)

(a), (c), (d) Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kazan (Russia), 18 Kremlyovskaya street,
ddsungate@gmail.com

(b) Helwan University, P.O. 11795 Cairo, Egypt, Ain Helwan, Headquarter Building

Abstract

The article discusses the phenomenon of English as a Medium of Instruction in the global tertiary education context and the way it influences governmental policies and university approaches to admission and recruitment procedures. The authors have undertaken a compare and contrast research approach to EMI policies in Russia and Egypt derived from the analysis of the contexts of European and Arab countries. The purpose of the article is to discover common ground and trends typical for both countries as well as to outline the differences, further analysis of which could serve as a basis for future developments in EMI strategy pursued by both countries. The study revealed the common trends in EMI implementation policies in both countries including governmental country-wide projects with sufficient funding aimed at boosting universities' global competitiveness as well as positive attitude toward EMI. However, the extent of governmental involvement and support in EMI training and academic programs' provision represents a challenge. Moreover, the authors analyze the universities' policies in both countries in terms of implementing EMI programs, admission and recruitment requirements. Similarities and differences as well as recommendations and issues to be addressed in the nearest future by both countries are identified. The research showed that the EMI phenomenon, being a new trend for both Egypt and Russia, provides new horizons for expansion into the global educational market; however, it poses many challenges.

Keywords: EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), tertiary education, internationalization, policy, admission, recruitment.

© 2021 Dilyana D. Sungatullina, Lubna Shehab, Yuliya N. Gorelova, Oksana V. Polyakova

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Published by Kazan federal university and peer-reviewed under responsibility of IFTE-2021 (VII International Forum on Teacher Education)

* Corresponding author. E-mail: ddsungate@gmail.com

Introduction

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) was first implemented almost twenty years ago with the last decade witnessing its shift to a global phenomenon. Over the five-year period the number of publications analyzing various dimensions of EMI has been growing exponentially, and the topic is still in the focus of attention (Airey, Lauridsen, Räsänen, Salö, & Schwach, 2017; Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017). This derives from internationalization of education around the European educational landscape with further spread over Latin American countries, former Soviet Union states as well as Asian and Arab world.

Researchers investigated cultural, linguistic, institutional dimensions of EMI policy implementation in China (Hu & Lei, 2014), Turkey (Duran & Sert, 2019), the Netherlands (Duarte & van der Ploeg, 2019), South Korea (Kym, I. & Kym, M. H., 2014), Indonesia (Ibrahim, 2001) and interpreted various case studies of teachers' and students' perception, governmental policies, challenges that all stakeholders face. The broadest analysis was implemented by Dearden (2015) who considered in detail governmental policies regarding EMI in 26 countries. However, Russia and Egypt were excluded from the list despite the fact that both countries are prominent representatives of East-European and Arab world with their specific governmental and institutional EMI initiatives.

EMI phenomenon cannot be meaningfully interpreted based exclusively on the globalization concepts, which are forcing countries to rethink their political and social structures, economic relations, and cultural values. Amidst global interconnectedness, modern states have developed more and more similar policy agendas that prioritized education (Myint, 2011; Parjanadze, 2009). The EMI trend originated in Europe, namely in the countries where English is a common means of communication. These are Nordic and northern European countries. Then, it spread smoothly and gradually to southern and eastern European countries and the rest of the world, including Arab and Asian countries. The reason is that English has become the dominant language in the academic environment. Hence, the patterns of EMI phenomenon are of a particular interest, especially those pertaining to the European countries and those which are specific for a particular region.

Purpose and objectives of the study

Thus, the aim of the current research is to compare and contrast EMI policies in tertiary education in Egypt and Russia with the view to discover common ground and trends typical for both countries as well as to outline the differences, further analysis of which could serve as the basis for future developments in EMI strategy implemented by both countries.

This comparative study also sets to clarify to what extent the European approach to EMI integration affects the policies and governmental agendas regarding EMI in higher education (HE) in Egypt and Russia.

This descriptive theoretical study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the European approach to EMI integration in HE underpin EMI adaptation in Egypt and Russia?
2. What is the national policy regarding the EMI academic environment in HE in Egypt and Russia?
3. What is the university approach to EMI implementation in Egypt and Russia?
4. What are the requirements for academic staff to be admitted to teach and for students to be enrolled into EMI academic programs in both countries?

Literature review

EMI and the European Context

The Bologna Declaration (European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, 1999) and the internationalization policy in tertiary education across most European countries have considerably altered the original approach to university language policies. Universities are currently witnessing an upsurge of academic programs in English. Nordic countries, namely Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, were among the pioneers in EMI integration into the higher education environment. Presumably, although there is a vivid increase in the rate of enrollment into universities among the indigenous population, the number of those speaking Nordic languages is still relatively low (Airey et al., 2017). Therefore, Nordic countries, being less densely populated (with roughly 27 million people in total) and having smaller markets to sustain exclusively the first language instruction in all educational domains, are considered to be in the mainstream of the EMI trend (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Overall, approximately 60% of universities in the Nordic region offer EMI programs, mostly at a graduate level and predominantly in the fields of technology, business, and natural sciences (Wilkinson, 2017). Although it is difficult to have a constant update on the number of EMI academic programs in countries with non-English environment, to date, Sweden implements 112 undergraduate EMI programs and 1144 graduate EMI programs (Study in Sweden, n.d.), whereas in Finland (studyinfo.fi, n.d.) and Denmark (Julia, 2021) the number is three times less.

However, the spread of EMI programs brings in critical issues on both state and local levels in these European countries. Firstly, the Nordic government expresses a great concern regarding the preservation and promotion of the Nordic languages, which might be threatened by the expansion of English into HE (Airey et al., 2017).

Secondly, low English language proficiency of students may hinder their academic progress challenging knowledge acquisition of abstract concepts in various disciplinary fields (Duff, 1997). This may result in students' poor engagement during group discussions, language code switching and poor notetaking skills. On the other hand, the research on the first language (L1) and English-medium education prove the fact that such discrepancy fade away after the first year of studying at the EMI academic program. This is explained by the fact that many students adapt to a new educational environment. Thirdly, there are concerns regarding the proficiency of the academic staff to teach in English in the Nordic countries (Airey, 2010; Klaassen & de Graaff, 2001).

Generally, the issues of teaching through EMI and certain requirements to the teaching competence of the university professors are common in their representation throughout the European continent. Reduced speech pace and speech accuracy (Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011), low-expressed intonation patterns, refusal for teaching in English (Pulcini & Campagna, 2015), extended workload on lecture preparation (Gürtler & Kronewald, 2015), new teaching strategy adaptation specifically for students with lower English language proficiency (Klaassen & de Graaff, 2001; Suviniitty, 2010) are substantial obstacles encountered by the vast majority of professors.

The trend of internationalization through EMI was initiated in Serbian higher education institutions in 2013, though being still limited in the number of academic programs offered at undergraduate and graduate levels. Nevertheless, a serious attempt was undertaken in the academic staff capacity building in delivering lectures in English by supporting and enhancing their teaching skills along with English language proficiency and pragmatic strategies. Thus, the distinguishing feature of Serbian approach to tailoring the EMI course is that the emphasis is made not only upon the teaching methodology but also the use of English grammar, English phraseology, and the English language for classroom interaction (Đorđević & Blagojevic, 2019).

However, not all European countries display such a positive approach to EMI integration into university education. Italy and France are the countries illustrating cautious attitudes toward the trend, fearing national language loss as well as "freedom in teaching" violation (Dimova, Hultgren, & Jensen, 2015). Slovakia, on the contrary, has a rather neutral position about English-based teaching, though "few Slovak universities offer study programs taught in English, apart from certain medical schools, which are popular and continue to attract students from inside and outside Europe" (Ciprianova & Minasyan, 2017, p. 55).

Methodology

This study is based on the assumption that Europe pioneered in EMI integration in HE and constructed the pillars for its future dissemination around the globe. In this study, we highlight that the introduction of EMI had both universal and individual features. We presumed that universal features are the patterns which were common for all the European countries following the EMI trend set by the Bologna process. Universal features comprised both benefits and obstacles, whereas individual features were unique for a particular region, i.e. specific in regard to the local policies and educational standards.

Therefore, we employed a comparative research design (Lor, 2019) to distinguish universal and specific features of EMI implementation in Egypt and Russia. The comparative analysis was based on four broad dimensions within the EMI trend as they determine the preliminary strategic goals to be set and to be attained for efficient EMI adaptation in HE:

1. State: countrywide policies, educational standards, international rankings;
2. University: university management strategy, university policy;
3. Academic staff: requirements for the staff to be employed at EMI programs;
4. Students: admission requirements.

Results

The national policy regarding EMI academic environment in HE in Russia

Russian national education policy

After the implementation of the Bologna declaration in the European HE in 2000s, the Russian Federation took a slower approach to the innovations in the academic environment. It was not until 2010 when the Russian government initiated several tremendous changes in HE to boost universities' competitiveness in the global education stage.

Therefore, in 2012 the federal Project 5-100 (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, n.d.) was introduced in the largest public Russian universities. The Project aimed at promoting HE institutions to the world education market, balancing acknowledged academic excellence and Russian academic traditions. The Project was supposed to have a comprehensive goal aimed at obtaining and strengthening the country's position on the global academic arena through internationalization in all university spheres including instruction, research, students' and professors' capacity building, and innovative infrastructure development.

The Project 5-100, incorporated into the “Strategy for Social and Economic Reform” (Government of the Russian Federation, 2008), was organized on a competitive basis, integrating top Russian universities capable of creating the roadmaps as a guide for their strategic development that could ensure the approval of the Russian Ministry of Education to support the universities with substantial funding. In total, roughly 5.73% of the country’s GDP was allocated to education and science in 2013. On the one hand, the universities participating in the Project were to report on their progress, thus, the amount of allocated funds was reduced or increased. On the other hand, the universities were relatively independent in determining the tools and techniques utilized for attaining the goals.

As a matter of fact, all the participating universities acknowledged the significance of EMI programs for the Russian higher education internationalization process since the programs were a driving force for enlarging the geographical diversity of students applying to the academic programs in Russia. Consequently, Russian universities admittedly benefited from enhanced global competitiveness, access to innovative data, enhanced international experience of both students and professors due to academic exchange programs, increased graduate employability along with improved language proficiency and boosted income of higher education institutions (HEI) (Galloway, Kriukow, & Numajiri, 2017). The number of EMI programs in Russian universities has dramatically increased from 122 in 2015 to 3160 in 2019, and the number is still increasing.

In 2019, along with the specific programs for Higher Educational Establishments (Government of the Russian Federation, 2018) the Government of the Russian Federation initiated a nation-wide project “Education” (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2019) integrating all educational levels and covering the export of HE as one of its priorities. Thus, the number of international students enrolled in Russian HEI is expected to rocket from 220,000 in 2017 to 710,000 by 2025 (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2019). To achieve this goal the government plans to allocate a significant load of 116-143 bln rubles annually, accounting for 1.5-2% of the Federal budget of the Russian Federation for this purpose only (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2019).

Accordingly, we may conclude that EMI integration into the tertiary level of education in Russia was a top-down initiative, having resulted in the introduction and development of the joint academic programs between partnering western and Russian universities, increased number of international students along with enhanced research and teaching reputation. According to Interfax (Russia is competing for international students, 2018), in 2018, the Russian Federation was included in the top six countries chosen by international students for higher education.

Twenty-one universities took part in the Project 5-100, and nineteen universities were included in the world QS and THE rankings due to the transformation of universities from purely teaching to research ones, with an increased proportion of international students and academic staff. Moreover, tremendous changes occurred in the educational policy during a ten-year period in contrast to the prior periods, which led to the shift in academic mentality of Russian universities' management teams. Similarly, university approaches to the provision of educational services have been considerably modified. Today, HEI are favoring a more customer-centered approach on a global scale enlarging their target audience and adapting curricula to meet the global requirements.

The university approach to EMI implementation in Russia

Participating in the Project 5-100, universities developed strategies to increase their competitiveness. To compete in the global educational market, the number of undergraduate and more importantly graduate programs in English had to grow significantly. The universities either launched joint academic programs with foreign universities, mainly with the UK, Germany, Finland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Spain, the USA, China, and South Korea, or designed their own curricula and syllabi to provide education in English.

While the importance of a detailed study of the issue was underestimated, and its implementation was of chaotic and sometimes intuitive nature, every university developed its own approach to achieve the goal. The most traditional one includes the introduction of separate elective courses (from 2 to 4) in English for local and international mobility students followed by a shift to the instruction entirely in English. This approach stemmed from a limited number of both university teachers capable of instructing in English and students ready to study in a non-native language. With the development of internationalization policies, universities started implementing programs entirely in the English language, although both academic staff and students experienced serious difficulties.

Above all, a considerable number of EMI programs is mainly provided at the faculties of business and management, engineering, and international relations as these majors are high-demanded among local applicants. Medical sciences are also taught in English since this field of study is exceptionally sought-after by students from South Asian states such as India, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Staff requirements

Unfortunately, Russian universities experience the lack of qualified EMI teaching staff, and the problem is not limited to English language proficiency only. The contradiction lies in the gap between a significant number of experienced professors, and a scarce number of novice teachers.

The former has deep subject content knowledge though find it problematic to teach in English as they were educated in the Soviet Era when the “read-and-translate” method was predominant at schools and universities. The latter group demonstrates sufficient language qualification for EMI, however, they require additional training in teaching methodology. HEI can choose to invite foreign professors, which is costly, or build the capacity of their own staff to acquire sufficient qualification to teach in EMI programs. Currently, most universities adopt a universal approach to verify teachers’ language proficiency before employing them to an EMI program (Baker & Hüttner, 2017). However, other important skills such as an intercultural competence, classroom interaction techniques alongside with active learning methods’ implementation are predominantly overlooked. Hence, the trial-and-error method forced universities to introduce EMI training courses and workshops for their staff for almost 10 years. We assume that certification of university teaching staff by authorized EMI centres is required to improve competition between the academic staff and, consequently, the quality of education.

Admission policies

In Russia, there are no unified requirements for applicants to EMI programs. Universities outline their own criteria which typically include:

- Results of a Unified State Exam for school graduates (each university sets its own minimum score);
- Results of international English language proficiency exams including TOEFL and IELTS;
- Interview with the admission committee in English;
- A mixture of two approaches mentioned above (typically, exam results and interview).

Such variety of procedures results from the fact that Russian universities have set and are still setting the targets on constant fund-raising, thus, EMI programs are typically more expensive than those in Russian. However, admission requirements are not focused on checking students’ Academic English proficiency, which is one of the pillars for efficient educational process. It rather concentrates on general language skills, and Level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference is considered sufficient to be admitted. Consequently, inadequate language proficiency results in poor academic performance with further dismissal or a transfer to a program delivered in the Russian language.

The national policy regarding EMI academic environment in HE in Egypt

The Context of Arab Countries

The Middle East witnessed a sharp rise in the use of EMI in HEI, specifically through the trend of providing an intensive preparatory year for English-taught programs. There are different points of views regarding EMI in Arab countries. The Academic Accreditation Committee at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research directed the universities to teach 50% of its courses in English language as a global requirement for teaching sciences and technology (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). Some universities decided to teach all courses in English. For example, Ajmann University leaders stated that “English is the language of sciences and technology” (Eissa, 2006). Although the Saudi Ministry of Education identified the English language proficiency as one of eleven key goals, the idea that the expansion of English is a threat to the Arabic language and the religion of Islam has gained momentum since then (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018). Researchers recommended Arab universities to provide books and references in both languages (Arabic and English) to facilitate understanding of the content. Some Arab countries are, on the contrary, against EMI in fear of it being a threat to their national identity (Eissa, 2006).

In 1950s, Egypt had the trend to teach using the Arabic language in HE. This was the result of shift in national independence and national identity. Thus, the legislative framework has the law to use Arabic in teaching. In 1980s, the trend moved toward using EMI in certain English-taught programs. Students had to pay extra fees for such programs (Selim, n.d.). The survey (Population Council, 2011) of the higher education system in Egypt showed that in addition to the limited opportunities for graduates to acquire soft skills, the curriculum is not sufficient for the labor market demands. Furthermore, the report claims that Egypt also faces the challenge of having surplus in graduates in comparison to the job opportunities, mainly in such sectors as humanities, business, and law.

The statistical analysis (El Badawi, 2012) showed that the economic background of students and their families is the impetus for choosing English-taught programs, forcing the universities to modify certain fields of study into the EMI environment. In particular, most rich families prefer such majors as business, engineering, and medicine. They invest in private universities and joint academic programs of Egypt and western counties at public universities. Poor families select such majors as humanities and law, which is why these fields are left with no EMI support.

The governmental agencies, labor market, HEIs graduates and strategic stakeholders’ points of views showed that:

- 50% of university graduates studying at Arabic-taught programs and majoring in humanities and business cannot find jobs as the graduates from EMI programs are in greater demand at the job market.
- Graduates encounter noticeable challenges in second language acquisition.
- The use of second language in HEI is very limited.
- Academic staff lacks competencies to deliver programs in the second language (OECD & the World Bank, 2010).

It may be assumed that EMI is introduced to the Egyptian tertiary education to empower graduates and researchers, enhance teaching in English, provide the state with employees capable to work in international companies and banks.

Governmental Policy

Strategy 4.0 of the Egypt Sustainable Development Plan 2030, developed by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), sets to implement 22 mega projects in 5 main sectors, namely national universities, new public universities, technological universities, international universities' branches, and research centers and institutes. The MOHE strategic vision is to access competitive global quality education through establishing international branches of Canadian, British, Italian, and American universities and through the national universities that run only EMI programs. One example is the Egyptian Japanese University for Science and Technology (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020).

Thus, the national policy favors EMI integration through the development of new types of universities that are supported by the ministerial action plan reflecting the trends of policy makers in Egypt. The trends are as follows:

- Establishment of an agency for technical and vocational education programs accreditation.
- Establishment of the planning committee for technological education sector.
- Introduction of dual and joint degrees in partnership with prestigious universities (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020).

These trends directed most universities toward integrating EMI through network academic programs, cooperation with technical universities in Germany, development of artificial intelligence divisions, and international partnerships with world class universities. This is aimed at the enhancement of the technological education sector as well as the promotion of Egyptian universities in the world rankings.

The university approach to EMI implementation in Egypt

The trend of EMI in Egypt emerged in 1970s. It was limited to the faculties of business and commerce with further intrusion to various disciplines such as law, media, economics, and archaeology. Obviously, this initiative facilitates the attraction of foreign students. Likewise, EMI was introduced to international programs at national universities such as Nile University and research universities such as E- JUST, as teaching in the English language was considered as a service for Egyptian students (Selim, n.d.).

The variety and diversity of academic programs at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels in public universities including EMI programs stimulate fund raising as students have to pay higher tuition fees to be admitted into EMI programs. Furthermore, Egyptian universities tend to develop memorandum of understanding or partnership agreements with world-class universities to support EMI integration (Strategic Planning and Policy Support Unit, 2015).

Academic Staff Requirements

Most Egyptian universities lack qualified academic staff to teach in EMI programs since there are no specific requirements for them. Most universities depend on the decisions of the department council who nominate or select teaching staff based on the minimum recruitment requirements. The academic staff has to prove their English language proficiency by passing TOEFL test with minimum score determined by the university.

The Egyptian universities' law (MOHE, 2006) allows hiring foreign academic staff as visiting professors to teach in EMI programs with the consent from the university president. Such decision can be justified by the shortage of highly qualified local tertiary teachers. The length of the labor contract in this case does not exceed a two-year period, but regular renewals are provided for the academic staff. The hosting university provides financial support for foreign visiting lecturers to have their annual vacation at their home country if their Egyptian teaching experience exceeds three years. Moreover, public universities support researchers taking MA and PhD degrees through training courses in the English languages (Ain Shams University, 2021).

Cultural Relations Committee of any university supports the academic staff capacity building through international grants which are allocated based on the departments' recommendations. The minimum requirement to apply for grants is B+ or a very good grade (MOHE, 2006).

The evaluation system criteria of academic staff related to EMI include:

- Number of translated books in the discipline;

- Number of citations or h-index;
- Participation in international conferences;
- Number of international awards (Supreme Council of Universities, 2019).

Admission Policy

National, international universities, and their branches aim at improving graduates' competitiveness and intended learning outcomes in accordance with the global requirements. Thus, the admission policy of EMI programs includes the following:

- The English language proficiency test (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020);
- Priority for language school graduates; researches proved that despite their small number, this cohort of graduates tend to apply for EMI programs (Selim, n.d.).

Discussion

Governmental policy

There is a strong tendency to internationalize both Egyptian and Russian universities in the global education market specifically, in the fields of teaching and research. Undoubtedly, this goal can be achieved through EMI which is gradually becoming a must in the competitive education market. National projects (Egypt Sustainable Development Plan 2030, the Russian Federal Project 5-100) launched and financed by the governments of both countries aim at promoting universities in international rankings through joint educational and research programs with international partners. Equally important, both governments express positive attitudes toward English language integration into the education framework, having no concerns about the risk of national languages to be threatened. The reason for such an approach is determined by the number of local population constituting over 100 mln people in Egypt and 146 mln people in Russia unlike European countries with some states barely having 10 mln people, which makes them vulnerable to the national identity loss. Although the governments in Egypt and Russia encourage cross-country collaboration between the universities on the global scale, the number of EMI academic programs offered at universities in both countries are not viewed as a key element for assessing HEI in terms of quality, reputation, and ranking in the local education market. Consequently, EMI integration in Egypt and Russia is entrusted to universities' management teams.

The University Approach to EMI implementation

The introduction of double-degree and/or joint academic programs in collaboration with prestigious foreign universities characterizes both Egypt and Russia. Such programs are designed in such a way that students have a unique opportunity to study at a local university and a partnering foreign university, fulfilling all the academic requirements at both institutions. As a result, graduates become highly competitive in the global market due to the comprehensive knowledge acquired during the period of education. Also, university management teams in both countries are free to determine partnering universities autonomously, considering advantages such cooperation may offer both sides in terms of academic degrees, teaching opportunities, and research. However, both countries are inclined at generating profit from EMI programs, likewise European states which set higher tuition fees for international students enrolling to their EMI programs. Unlike Russia, Egyptian public universities maintain the traditional teaching paradigm, whereas private universities tend to adopt student-centered strategies in English medium education. At the same time, both countries offer EMI programs primarily in business, medicine, and engineering leaving behind other fields of study. Proliferation of English medium education in Russia does not cancel challenges faced by universities regarding curricula and syllabus design since the international standards of education provision in HE generally do not correlate with the local university requirements. This eventually results in the abundance of subjects that students have to study instead of focusing on a particular subject.

Academic Staff Requirements

Regarding professional development of academic staff in relation to teaching in EMI programs, both countries endure the lack of qualified specialists capable of delivering lectures and seminars in English. This also characterizes European universities and prioritizes the task of capacity building at a state level. The most obvious difficulties encountered by academic staff in Egypt and Russia are the low level of English language proficiency (low fluency and accuracy, poor knowledge of academic English), considerable increase in time for preparing lectures, low financial stimulus, the necessity of a special classroom language for interaction between students. Unlike Egypt, Russia's EMI approach goes far beyond pure language skills encompassing and overlapping with active teaching strategies crucial in present collaboration with Generation Z. There is a constantly growing awareness among Russian university professors about the fact that students' academic success is heavily determined by the contextual factors where the instructor's teaching competence plays a pivotal role. The top Russian universities are implementing a top-down approach in robust support system provision for non-native English lecturers by either tailoring in-house trainings and workshops for the staff, or by funding professional development programs for the staff in English speaking countries, mainly the UK.

Although invitation of foreign professor is a reasonable possibility to increase the quality of EMI programs in Egypt and Russia, it turns out to be exceedingly expensive, hence, requires additional financial backing as well as the university president's approval. One solution for both countries is participation in international projects such as Erasmus+ initiated by the European Union or Fulbright supported by the American government.

In terms of requirements imposed on university teaching staff to be allowed to teach in EMI degree programs, there are no specific requirements in Egypt and Russia, likewise in the majority of the European countries. Thus, we assume that universities should identify their own basic requirements for professors to be qualified to teach in EMI programs.

Admission Policy

Both Egypt and Russia have no unified specific requirements for applicants to EMI programs which will make them strongly distinguishable from programs in Egyptian or Russian. This mainly characterizes universities that define their own admission criteria which can be justified by the emergence of a wide array of new types of universities in Egypt and the absence of governmental principles regarding the issue in Russia. Undergraduate and graduate applicants may prove their English proficiency through the international testing systems such as IELTS or TOEFL, which is generally considered to be an option in Egypt and Russia. The European universities, on the other hand, oblige their students to present IELTS and TOEFL certificates.

Arguably, insufficient consideration of admission policies by both countries' university management teams may have a negative impact on students' academic achievements, resulting in the shift to the native language-medium instruction or the expulsion from the university. Consequently, rigorous transformation should be provided at this dimension of EMI implementation.

Conclusion

Despite the limited scope of this research paper, its findings outline preliminary strategies of EMI implementation in Egypt and Russia. Although the extended report on EMI dissemination throughout the world (Dearden, 2015) exclude Egypt and Russia from the list of countries adapting EMI, both countries are widely implementing EMI in HE as a means of internationalization.

While a thorough analysis of both countries' approaches to the EMI trend revealed an upward tendency in the use of the model, it is still impossible to identify the unifying strategies of its implementation at the national and university levels.

However, it could be concluded that implementation of EMI strategies in Egypt and Russia is based on the European patterns, thus, exposing the countries to similar challenges and opportunities.

Most importantly, the conducted research indicates the need of governmental financial support in tailoring workshops and training programs for the EMI professors both in Egypt in Russia. In contrast to the general English language capacity building programs, EMI trainings should focus on a broader variety of topics and interactive teaching methodology in particular. Obviously, teachers at EMI degrees should identify the range of possible challenges faced by most students. Thus, EMI academic staff needs to obtain additional skills of English-medium teaching, which will distinguish them from other colleagues, delivering the same content through native language-medium instruction.

Finally, the main concern related to EMI programs regardless the field of studies both in Egyptian and Russian educational contexts are students' lack of English language skills. Even if students' level of English is higher than B2 (according to CEFR), quite often their Academic English proficiency lags behind since many students underestimate its role. Given that Academic English is a fundamental for student's academic achievements, it is an indispensable prerequisite to introduce a preparatory course on Academic English during the first year of studies in both countries, which will act as a supporting element in overcoming challenges related to content knowledge acquisition in non-linguistic majors. Additionally, EMI professors should be in constant collaboration with English language teachers to bridge the gap in students' knowledge and maintain high quality of education.

The research showed that the EMI phenomenon, being a new trend for both Egypt and Russia, provides new horizons for expansion into the global educational market, but it poses many challenges. The most pressing ones concern the extent of governmental involvement and support in EMI training and academic programs' provision; fundamental elements of the tailored EMI course for the university professors to build their capacities for participation in joint academic programs; the correlation between the required level of the English language proficiency and the specifics of the discipline being studied; student's language training plan during the first year of tertiary education.

Funding

This paper has been supported by the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgements

The authors have no support to report.

References

- Ain Shams University. (2021). *Center for Developing English Language Teaching*. Retrieved from <http://www.asu.edu.eg/ar/ce/88/page>
- Airey, J. (2010). The ability of students to explain science concepts in two languages. *Hermes: Journal of Language and Communication Studies*, 45, 35-49.
- Airey, J., Lauridsen, K. M., Räsänen, A., Salö, L., & Schwach, V. (2017). The expansion of English-medium instruction in the Nordic countries: Can top-down university policies encourage bottom-up disciplinary literacy goals? *Higher Education*, 73, 561-57.
- Baker, W., & Hüttner, J. (2017). English and more: A multisite study of roles and conceptualisations of language in English medium multilingual universities from Europe to Asia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38(6), 501-516.
- Ciprianova, E., & Minasyan, S. (2017). English language education policies in east central Europe: the cases of Slovakia and Ukraine. *Cross - cultural studies: education and science*, 2(1), 49-66.
- Dimova, S., Hultgren, A. K., & Jensen, C. (Eds.). (2015). *English-medium instruction in European higher education (Vol. 4)*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Đorđević, J., & Blagojevic, S. (2019). University teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of English as a medium of instruction in Serbian higher education. *Journal of Language, Literature, Arts and Culture*, 44, 153-165.
- Dearden, J. (2015). *English as a medium of instruction – a growing phenomenon*. Retrieved from www.teachingenglish.org.uk
- Duarte, J., & van der Ploeg, M. (2019). Plurilingual lecturers in English medium instruction in the Netherlands: the key to plurilingual approaches in higher education?. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 9(3), 268-284.

- Duff, P. A. (1997). Immersion in Hungary: An ELF experiment. In R. K. Johnson & M. Swain (Eds.), *Immersion education: International perspectives* (pp.19-43). Cambridge, UK: CUP.
- Duran, D., & Sert, O. (2019). Preference organization in English as a Medium of Instruction classrooms in a Turkish higher education setting. *Linguistics and Education*, 49, 72-85.
- Eissa, M. (2006). الدخول مسموح لمنسوبي الجامعات المشتركة فقط [The Effect of Using English Language as Medium of Instruction in Teaching Education Techniques in Agmann University of Sciences and Technology from the Students and Faculty Staff Perspective]. Retrieved from <http://search.mandumah.com/Download?file=DOKhHIX2DH3yiO2jStGrCdwP1RL4NwZl/ReGexMkjMQ=&id=3478>
- El Badawi, A. (2012). هل تؤدي الاملائية إلى تكافؤ الفرص؟ [Higher Education in Egypt. Will the Free Education lead to the Equity]. Retrieved from https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2012PGY_AccessHigherEdEgypt_ar.pdf
- European Ministers in charge of Higher Education. (1999). *The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999: Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education*. Retrieved from https://www.eurashe.eu/library/bologna_1999_bologna-declaration-pdf/
- Fenton-Smith, B., Humphreys, P., & Walkinshaw, I. (2017). *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific*. New York, NY: Springer International Publishing.
- Galloway, N., Kriukow, J., & Numajiri, T. (2017). *Internationalisation, Higher Education and the Growing Demand for English: An Investigation into the English Medium of Instruction (EMI) Movement in China and Japan*. Retrieved from https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/H035%20ELTRA%20Internationalisation_HE_and%20the%20growing%20demand%20for%20English%20A4_FINAL_WEB.pdf
- Government of the Russian Federation. (2008). *Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020*. Retrieved from http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_82134/28c7f9e359e8af09d7244d8033c66928fa27e527/
- Government of the Russian Federation. (2018). *Government program of the Russian Federation "Education Development"*. Retrieved from <http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/860/events/>

- Gürtler, K., & Kronewald, E. (2015). Internationalization and English-medium instruction in German higher education. In S. Dimova, A. K. Hultgren, & C. Jensen (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education* (pp. 88-114). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Hu, G., & Lei, J. (2014). English-medium instruction in Chinese higher education: A case study. *Higher Education*, 67(5), 551-567.
- Ibrahim, J. (2001). *The implementation of EMI (English Medium Instruction) in Indonesian universities, its threats, its problems, and its possible solutions*. Paper presented at the 49th International TEFLIN Conference, Bali, Indonesia.
- Jensen, C., & Thøgersen, J. (2011). Danish University lecturers' attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction. *Ibérica, Revista de la Asociación Europea de Lenguas para Fines Específicos*, 22, 13-33.
- Kym, I., & Kym, M. H. (2014). Students' Perceptions of EMI in Higher Education in Korea. *The journal of Asia TEFL*, 11(2), 35-61.
- Klaassen, R. G., & de Graaff, E. (2001). Facing innovation: preparing lecturers for English-medium instruction in a non-native context. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 26(3), 281-289.
- Lor, P. J. (2019). *International and comparative librarianship: concepts and methods for global studies*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36-76.
- Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. (2019). *National project "Education"*. Retrieved from <https://edu.gov.ru/national-project/>
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2020). *MOHE Strategy in the Light of Sustainable Development Plan for Egypt 2030*, Cairo. Retrieved from http://portal.mohe.gov.eg/en-us/Documents/sr_strategy.pdf
- Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. (n.d.). *5-100 Russian Academic Excellence Project*. Retrieved from <https://www.5stop100.ru/en/about/more-about/>

- MOHE. (2006). *Egyptian Universities Law and its Executive Bylaw*, 24 edition, Supreme Council of Universities, Cairo. Retrieved from http://www.eth.mpg.de/4098166/Elliesie_SFB700_Rule-of-Law-Egypt.pdf
- Myint, T. (2011). Globalization and the Institutional Dynamics of Global Environmental Governance. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 18(1), 400-410.
- OECD & the World Bank. (2010). *Review of the National Higher Education Policies in Egypt*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/44913775.pdf>
- Parjanadze, N. (2009). Globalisation theories and their effect on education. *IBSU Scientific Journal*, 3(2), 77-88.
- Population Council. (2011). *Survey of Young People in Egypt. Final report*. Retrieved from https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY_SYPEFinalReport_ar.pdf
- Pulcini, V., & Campagna, S. (2015). Internationalisation and the EMI controversy in Italian higher education. In S. Dimova, A. K. Hultgren, & C. Jensen (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education* (pp. 64-87). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Russia is competing for international students. (2018). Retrieved from <https://academia.interfax.ru/ru/events/articles/2145/>
- Selim, M. (n.d.). *EMI in Egyptian Universities*. Retrieved from <http://www.egyptclub.de/Studium-in-Fremdsprache.htm>
- Strategic Planning and Policy Support Unit. (2015). *The Government Strategy for Higher Education Development in Egypt (2015- 2030)*, Ministry of Higher Education, Cairo. Retrieved from <http://portal.mohe.gov.eg/en-us/Pages/Council-Technological-Colleges.aspx>
- Study in Sweden. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://studyinsweden.se/plan-your-studies/degree-programmes/>
- Studyinfo.fi. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://studyinfo.fi/wp2/en/>
- Supreme Council of Universities. (2019). *System and Rules of the Scientific Committees for Promoting Academic Staff, Round 13(2019-2022)*, Cairo. Retrieved from <https://www.asu.edu.eg/2529/news/the-supreme-council-of-universities-in-its-regular-meeting-announces-the-schedule-for-the-new-academic-year>

- Suviniitty, J. (2010). Lecturers' questions and student perception of lecture comprehension. *Helsinki English Studies*, 6, 44–57.
- Julia, G. (2021). *Study In Denmark In English*. Retrieved from <https://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/europe/denmark/study-denmark-english>
- Wächter, B., & Maiworm, F. (Eds.). (2014). *English-taught programmes in European higher education: The state of play in 2014*. Bonn: Lemmens Medien GmbH.
- Wilkinson, R. (2017). *Trends and issues in English-medium instruction in Europe*. In K. Ackerley, M. Guarda, & F. Helm (Eds.), *Sharing Perspectives on English-Medium Instruction* (pp. 35-75). Bern: Peter Lang.