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INTERACTIVE TEACHING STYLE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION (AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE)

Language aspects are the biggest EMI (English medium instruction) challenge, because English is not a native language for either a student or a teacher, and often for both. The necessity of a high level of English proficiency is undisputable. It is the language that performs the function of an instrument that provides understanding, transfer, acquisition and accumulation of knowledge, as well as nominating the new concepts. The constantly growing demand for EMI education and an increase in the number of students and teachers who seek to study and to teach within EMI environment leads to reduction of the percentage of students and teachers who speak English at the level of advanced or advanced user in the total number of EMI participants. This situation requires searching for the means that can assure EMI education quality in the described a situation.

Our investigation was done with the purpose to describe the achievements of foreign linguists and pedagogics in search of ways to improve EMI quality.

Requirements to the level of English language proficiency of EMI students and teachers have always been under consideration of linguists who have to do with medium instruction. Almost a decade ago, it was assumed an EMI teacher needed the skills to adapt the teaching material from a language perspective, "they would need to know how to modify their input, assure compensation via student-initiated interactive modifications and create an atmosphere where students operate in an L2 are not afraid to speak" [1, p. 23].

Increasing the level of English language proficiency of the subject teachers is not sufficient from the point of view of improving EMI quality [2]. The report on the results of the investigation "English Language for Universities" conducted in Ukraine

highlighted the need to change the teaching style "from a teacher-led transmission style to a more interactive one" [3, p.62].

When interactive learning is used the students are involved in receiving the content knowledge through constant interaction with the teacher, other students, use of audio, visuals, videos, hands-on demonstrations. The range of interactive classroom activities is broad; it includes both well-known and frequently used in teaching and less known: brainstorming, icebreaker activities, jigsaw activities, enhanced lectures, flipped class, storytelling, project work, case studies, field trips, ranking exercises, student-led lessons, small group discussions, role plays, simulations, debate, games, opinion polls, open-ended stimulus, researching and presenting a topic, taking a stand, fishbowl, values clarification, opinion polls, visual aids, involving experts – in fact, all types of educational activity, which differ from in-input teaching strategies (receiving the information on the subject through reading and listening the teacher and memorizing).

Through the interaction, the student gets a new or improved understanding of the scientific phenomenon, when necessary, replacing the wrong concept of scientific processes and interactions, the so-called ‘conceptual change’ [4].

Interactive learning activates the cognitive activity of students, provides not only mechanical memorizing of the content and knowledge accumulation, but also promotes establishment of logical associations and implication of the received knowledge; gives a feeling of comfort in the classroom, which encourages the interest to the educational activity, provides free expression of thoughts, creativity, and thus increases motivation to study and self-evaluation of the students, cultivates respect for the other person’s opinion, responsibility for knowledge when working in a team, promotes socialization of students, teaches them to defend their point of view, or position [5].

The interactive classroom environment is characterized by openness, interaction of the participants, equality of argumentation, forming of common knowledge, possibility of mutual evaluation and control [6].

The studies investigating of interactive teaching of medical disciplines show that the majority of students feel the need for such classes, they result in statistically significant increase of the students' performance. It was also shown that the students involved in active learning learn more vs. the students participating in passive sessions. Interactive lessons encourage evaluation of the content material, application of the knowledge to other types of situations and evaluation of the studies material, which plays a role in forming problem solving, decision making and communication skills [7], they are equally effective in terms of students' scores, both at online and offline teaching [8]. The use of interactive strategies increases the volume of the acquired material, stimulates thinking, inspires and motivates students, increases attention [9].

In addition to teaching content subjects, the effectiveness of interactive strategies has been shown in foreign language teaching. Meaning negotiation, for example, checking understanding, encouraging clarification enquiries, confirming understanding, is necessary for effective development of foreign language proficiency [10].

In EMI context student-centered approaches (which include interactive strategies) encourage the students to actively use English to show knowledge of subjects [11].

Therefore, the above suggests that the use of interactive teaching methods address both: improving the quality of teaching and enhancing English proficiency level, the latter, in turn, is a factor in improving the learning outcomes.

Despite the advantages of dialogue approaches to learning in the context of English education, various studies indicate that EMI teaching is less interactive than teaching in the native language [12, 13]. Lack of interactivity results in less opportunity for students to produce the knowledge of the subject in English, thus their role in the educational process becomes passive [13]. In this regard, it is emphasized that special professional development programs, which will provide understanding of pedagogical strategies in EMI context and will make the choice of such strategies more conscious, should be introduced for EMI teachers [14]. As it was

mentioned in the recent work on EMI pedagogies «The more we can raise awareness of different styles of teaching and strategies that foster interaction, the more we are able to improve EMI delivery across a range of higher education institutions» [15].

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