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EMI TEACHERS TRAINING TO PROVIDE EDUCATION QUALITY IN HIGHER MEDICAL SCHOOLS OF UKRAINE

Recently, English medium instruction (EMI) has become a common pattern in higher education. English as a Medium of Instruction supposes “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” [1]. Educators worldwide prove the necessity of definite changes in university teaching approaches and methods while implementing EMI programs.

Currently, EMI is used for teaching international students' groups in higher education schools of Ukraine, in particular, medical universities. Since its establishment, EMI has received a lot of attention of researchers, both English-language teachers and educators, resulting in a huge amount of works aimed at improving the quality of this type of instruction. Earlier works were largely focused on EMI teacher language proficiency [2]. Simultaneously it was noted that language issues resulting in poor interaction in class, in turn, lead to the fact that the students have less opportunity to produce content knowledge in English [3]. It became obvious that language command is not sufficient to provide success in the classroom. The attention of the teacher educators shifted to the issues of teaching style. As A. Bradford emphasized professional development of EMI teachers is not just improvement in English language proficiency [4]. Later the need of professional development in EMI contexts and pre-service training was stressed by E. Macaro, M. Akincioglu, et al. [5].

This two global approaches to improving the quality of EMI (i.e. linguistic and pedagogical) were joined together in the in the review of the level of EMI in the higher education institutions of Ukraine made by the British Council. It was noted that EMI lecturers need constant training support and universities should consider ways of providing it: "EMI lecturers require ongoing support and universities should consider ways of providing this"[6, p.35]. Two parameters were distinguished by the reviewers: "There are two dimensions to address – English language proficiency and teaching skills" [6, p.35].

Kharkiv National Medical University makes a lot of efforts to provide academic staff with opportunities to improve their general English language proficiency, English for medical purpose and English for teaching (on the one hand), and pedagogical skills, digital literacy, distance teaching skills, (on the other hand), which are essential to ensure the quality of higher education provided through the English language medium. Currently, a unified policy providing

institutional support has been developed for the university regarding the requirement of proficiency in English and English for special purposes, as well as scientific and methodological conferences of employees who share their experience in teaching foreign seekers of education of our university which are constantly held. EMI teachers regularly receive practical support from teachers of the Department of Foreign Languages of the University, who have many years of experience in training EMI teachers and, most importantly, in precisely those areas of knowledge taught at the university with EMI – medicine, dentistry, etc.

The core component is the EMI teacher's competence is a key element in creating English course concerning the special subjects. The students have to demonstrate an appropriate level of English to be able to complete the EMI in the university. A precautionary measure that guarantees restriction to a certain extent concerning a sufficient level of English is an entrance exam for applicants supposing assessment of their level of English language proficiency (B1).

Various forms of incentives and administrative support, clear standard requirements adopted in the university, free access to resources, in particular international texts through the university library to develop a course in profile subjects in English are provided for the university academic personnel. EMI teachers are involved in the system of self- and peer assessment, anonymous student survey, conferences concerning the quality of education through EMI, etc.

In conclusion, we agree that universities should support the development of EMI by providing their lecturers definite access to ongoing opportunities in developing their English proficiency (including the provided through courses run by the Foreign languages department). EMI teachers also need access to support the development of their teaching skills, as well. It may take the form of common approaches to the professional development of such as peer observation and regular opportunities for faculty to meet and talk about EMI.

Further investigation of the global experience of EMI teachers development can produce a beneficial effect on working out new programmes aimed at improving the quality of English medium instruction in Ukrainian universities.

References

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