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**PROSPECTS OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN MULTILINGUAL
UNIVERSITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN**

This article examines the opportunities and challenges associated with English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in multilingual universities of Kazakhstan. The study draws on survey and interview data collected from 252 undergraduate students and 18 university faculty members and focuses on three key dimensions of EMI implementation: institutional, professional-academic, and socio-cultural. The aim of the research is to explore how students and teachers perceive the impact of EMI on academic development, professional growth, and participation in the global educational environment. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis was employed.

The findings indicate that students primarily associate EMI with access to international academic resources and the development of academic skills, whereas faculty members emphasize opportunities for international publication and professional advancement. At the same time, the results reveal persistent challenges related to oral communication among some students and limited confidence in English language proficiency among a proportion of instructors. Differences were also identified in students' and teachers' perceptions of the role of EMI in future career development. Despite these challenges, most participants view EMI as a beneficial initiative that supports the internationalization of Kazakhstani higher education and facilitates engagement with the global academic community. The study concludes that stronger institutional support and targeted pedagogical measures can enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of EMI, contributing to its sustainable implementation in multilingual university settings.

Key words: English-Medium Instruction (EMI); multilingual education; higher education in Kazakhstan; academic English; internationalization of education; student perceptions; institutional support.

MAIN PROVISIONS

In the context of the ongoing internationalization of higher education, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has increasingly been viewed as a strategic approach for integrating national education systems into the global academic environment. EMI is commonly understood as the use of English for teaching academic subjects in settings where it is not the dominant language of communication.

A substantial body of research indicates that EMI contributes to improved access to international academic resources, supports the development of students' academic skills, and enhances their participation in global knowledge exchange. It is also frequently associated with increased academic mobility and broader professional opportunities for both students and faculty

members. For instructors, EMI may open pathways to international collaboration and publication, thereby strengthening their engagement in the global research community.

At the same time, existing studies highlight several challenges related to EMI implementation. These include varying levels of language proficiency among students and teachers, difficulties in expressing complex disciplinary concepts in a second language, and potential risks to the depth of content understanding. Without adequate pedagogical and institutional support, EMI may place additional cognitive and instructional demands on both learners and educators.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of adapting EMI practices to local educational contexts. Rather than being applied as a uniform model, EMI requires careful alignment with the linguistic, cultural, and institutional realities of specific settings. Effective implementation depends on targeted teacher training, the development of context-sensitive teaching strategies, and sustained institutional support.

In Kazakhstan, the relevance of EMI is strengthened by the multilingual structure of higher education, where Kazakh, Russian, and English function in different academic and social domains. In this context, EMI is not simply a transition to English as a language of instruction, but part of a broader process of educational modernization and international positioning of universities. Its implementation is closely connected with academic mobility, access to international research, and the preparation of graduates who are able to participate in global professional and scholarly communication.

However, the prospects of EMI in Kazakhstan depend on how effectively universities address the needs of both students and instructors. Students may benefit from access to international literature and the development of academic English, but they also require support in oral communication, discipline-specific vocabulary and academic writing skills. Similarly, instructors may gain opportunities for international collaboration and publication, yet they need systematic professional development to teach complex subject content through English in multilingual classrooms.

In this regard, EMI can be seen not only as a language policy initiative but also as a complex pedagogical phenomenon that requires a balanced approach, combining global academic expectations with local educational needs.

INTRODUCTION

English-Medium Instruction (EMI), defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where English is not the primary language of communication, has become an important part of the internationalization of higher education, promoting the global integration of universities, improving students' language skills, and expanding their academic and professional horizons [1]. English, playing the role of the "lingua franca" of science and international communication, allows students and teachers to participate in global educational and scientific initiatives, increasing their competitiveness at the international level [2].

In Kazakhstan, the introduction of EMI is considered to be a strategic element of the trilingual educational policy aimed at the development of Kazakh, Russian, and English as languages of instruction and intercultural communication [3]. This policy reflects Kazakhstan's aspiration to adapt to global challenges and strengthen its position in the international educational environment, preparing graduates for the demands of the globalized labor market [4].

An important aspect of internationalization is the development of applied scientific research in English and its integration into the international academic community. Kazakhstani science, gradually switching to English, gains greater opportunities to participate in global research initiatives and publish results in international peer-reviewed journals, which strengthens the international visibility of domestic researchers [5].

However, despite the increasing role of EMI in Kazakhstan's higher education policy, its practical implementation remains uneven across institutions, disciplines, and groups of learners. The introduction of English as a medium of instruction does not automatically guarantee successful internationalization or improved academic outcomes. In many cases, the effectiveness of EMI

depends on students' prior language preparation, teachers' readiness to deliver disciplinary content in English, and the availability of institutional support mechanisms. Therefore, it is important to examine EMI not only as a policy objective, but also as an educational practice experienced differently by its participants.

In multilingual universities, EMI is implemented within a complex linguistic environment where Kazakh, Russian, and English coexist in academic and everyday communication. This creates both opportunities and tensions. On the one hand, English may provide access to international academic literature, mobility programs, and wider professional networks. On the other hand, insufficient language support may limit students' participation, reduce their confidence in oral communication, and increase the instructional burden on teachers. These issues are particularly relevant for Kazakhstan, where EMI develops alongside national language policy and the broader modernization of higher education [6].

Although previous studies have examined EMI from the perspective of internationalization, language policy, and academic outcomes, further attention is needed to how students and instructors themselves evaluate the prospects of EMI in Kazakhstan. Their perceptions are important because they reveal not only the formal benefits of EMI, but also the practical conditions under which these benefits become accessible. In this sense, the present study contributes to the discussion by focusing on the institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural dimensions of EMI implementation in multilingual Kazakhstani universities.

Given this context, the present study investigates how EMI is perceived by those directly involved in its implementation. It focuses on the institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural opportunities that EMI creates for students and instructors in Kazakhstan's higher education institutions.

The main research question is formulated as follows:

What prospects does English-medium instruction (EMI) create for students and teachers in Kazakhstan?

Literature review. Over the past two decades, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has gained significant traction as a key mechanism for advancing the internationalization of higher education. It is often associated with improved access to global academic resources, enhanced language competence, and increased graduate competitiveness in the international job market [7; 8]. In multilingual settings, EMI can also serve as a bridging tool, linking local institutions with global academic communities and aligning curricula with international standards.

The motivations for implementing EMI, however, vary considerably across regions. In parts of Asia, such as South Korea, universities like KAIST have adopted EMI not only to boost their global visibility but also to attract international students and faculty [9]. Similar trends are visible in the Gulf states, where EMI is integrated into national strategies to enhance global competitiveness [10].

In contrast, European institutions often take a more balanced approach. Many universities, particularly in Scandinavia, pursue a "parallel language" policy, offering instruction in both English and the national language. This model allows them to reap the benefits of EMI while maintaining a strong commitment to linguistic and cultural preservation [2].

At the same time, a growing body of research demonstrates that EMI implementation is closely connected to questions of pedagogical adaptation and linguistic equity within the classroom. Although EMI is often introduced as a strategy for internationalization, its effectiveness largely depends on how successfully institutions respond to the linguistic diversity of students and teachers [2]. Several studies note that the transition to EMI may increase the cognitive demands placed on learners, particularly in contexts where English is rarely used outside academic settings [1]. Students are expected not only to understand disciplinary content, but also to process complex academic information through a second or third language, which may influence classroom participation and confidence in oral interaction [6].

Researchers also emphasize that EMI challenges are not limited to students alone. University instructors frequently encounter difficulties related to academic language use, spontaneous classroom communication, and explanation of discipline-specific concepts in English [9]. Even faculty members

with relatively high language proficiency may experience uncertainty when conducting discussions, responding to questions, or adapting teaching materials for multilingual audiences. In this regard, EMI requires not only language competence, but also pedagogical flexibility and the ability to balance content instruction with linguistic support [2].

Recent studies increasingly argue that successful EMI implementation depends on institutional readiness rather than language policy alone [5]. Universities are expected to provide sustained methodological and linguistic support for both students and faculty, including academic writing assistance, professional development programs, and opportunities for interactive language practice. Without such support, EMI risks creating unequal learning conditions in which students with stronger English backgrounds benefit more significantly than those from less privileged educational contexts [15].

In multilingual educational systems, these issues become particularly visible because English functions alongside national and regional languages rather than replacing them entirely [8]. As a result, EMI classrooms often develop hybrid communicative practices in which students and teachers strategically combine several linguistic resources to maintain academic interaction and content comprehension. Such practices demonstrate that EMI should not be viewed as a strictly monolingual model, but rather as a dynamic educational environment shaped by local linguistic realities [2].

In Central Asia, EMI has been embraced as a pathway to educational modernization. Governments in the region increasingly see EMI as a way to align their higher education systems with international benchmarks. However, the adoption of EMI in these settings is still in the early stages and presents unique logistical and pedagogical challenges. In many universities, EMI implementation is complicated by differences in language preparedness, unequal access to academic English, and limited methodological support for instructors.

While concerns about the dominance of English persist, several scholars emphasize that EMI, when supported by appropriate institutional frameworks, can coexist with local languages and even promote bilingual or multilingual academic environments [7; 10]. As researchers [2] point out, EMI has the potential to foster linguistic and cultural exchange, preparing students for global academic and professional engagement.

The implementation of English-medium instruction (EMI) in Kazakhstan is part of a broader national effort to modernize the education system. This initiative is aligned with the country's trilingual policy, which promotes the use of Kazakh, Russian, and English in education. Although Kazakh remains the state language, the inclusion of English serves to support Kazakhstan's engagement in global academic and economic processes [8].

Various government actions reflect this direction, including the introduction of EMI in universities as a step toward the internationalization of higher education. The Strategic Development Plan until 2025, for example, outlines goals such as expanding international partnerships, increasing academic mobility, and improving the global visibility of local universities. As of 2022, Kazakhstan had launched 195 dual degree programs in collaboration with 97 universities across 23 countries. Moreover, the government plans to open 27 branches of foreign universities by 2029, aiming to import global teaching standards and increase access to international qualifications [12].

Despite these ambitious steps, the actual reach of EMI remains limited. According to national statistics, only 8.5% of university students are currently enrolled in EMI programs [13]. This figure points to an ongoing gap between policy goals and institutional capacity, particularly, in terms of language infrastructure and faculty preparedness.

Nonetheless, the available research suggests that EMI can offer tangible benefits to students. Participation in EMI programs has been linked to improved academic writing, stronger analytical thinking, and greater confidence in using English for academic and professional purposes [5]. In addition, access to international literature and academic exchange programs enhances students' prospects for global career opportunities [14].

At the same time, some studies caution against overestimating the role of English proficiency in graduate success. Employers continue to prioritize subject knowledge and critical thinking skills, which may suffer if EMI courses prioritize language at the expense of content depth [15]. These

findings suggest the need for a more balanced approach to EMI, one that supports both linguistic competence and disciplinary expertise.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods design to examine how students and instructors perceive the prospects of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Kazakhstani universities. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the research aimed to capture a more nuanced understanding of EMI's impact across institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural dimensions.

A total of 252 second- and third-year undergraduate students and 18 faculty members participated in the study. All participants were affiliated with multilingual academic groups in Social Sciences and Natural Sciences programs. The sample was drawn from five higher education institutions across Kazakhstan, including national research universities and regional institutions, ensuring diversity in institutional context and geographic location.

The selection of participants from both Social Sciences and Natural Sciences programs was intended to capture EMI experiences across different disciplinary contexts. These academic fields were chosen because EMI implementation may vary depending on the nature of disciplinary communication, classroom interaction, and the extent of English-language academic resources used in instruction. Including universities from different regions of Kazakhstan also allowed the study to reflect variations in institutional support, language environment, and access to international academic opportunities.

Data collection involved two primary instruments: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The student questionnaire consisted of 22 items grouped into four thematic sections: (1) demographic background and prior English-learning experience; (2) perceived benefits of EMI (e.g., skill development, career preparation, academic confidence); (3) challenges faced during EMI (e.g., difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension); and (4) suggestions for improving EMI implementation. All 252 students and 18 teachers completed the survey.

Most questionnaire items were designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of students prior to the main stage of data collection to improve clarity and ensure that the questionnaire items were understandable for participants with different levels of English proficiency. Minor revisions were made after the pilot stage to improve the consistency of several questions related to language confidence and classroom participation.

To enrich the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students and 12 instructors. The interview protocol explored participants' personal experiences with EMI, including perceptions of language preparedness, access to academic resources, instructional challenges, and views on institutional support. Interviews also included questions about students' future aspirations and their alignment with EMI training.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, which allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences while still addressing a common set of thematic questions. Depending on participant preference, interviews were carried out in English, Kazakh, or Russian. This approach was intended to reduce linguistic pressure and encourage more detailed and reflective responses from both students and instructors.

To answer the research question, the data were divided into three main categories: institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural dimensions. Survey results were processed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations, and correlation analysis was conducted when relevant. Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically to identify recurring insights and common patterns.

The qualitative analysis followed a thematic coding procedure. Interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times in order to identify recurring categories related to institutional support, language challenges, academic adaptation, and perceptions of professional development. Similar

responses were grouped into broader thematic categories, which were then compared with the quantitative survey findings to strengthen the interpretation of results.

All ethical procedures were followed throughout the study, including prior approval from university ethics boards. Participants provided informed consent, and all responses were anonymized to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The research complied with ethical standards during all stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

RESULTS

This section presents the key findings on how students and faculty perceive the implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Kazakhstan. The results are grouped into three main dimensions: institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural.

Table 1 summarizes the main opportunities and challenges associated with EMI implementation as identified by students and instructors across the three dimensions.

Table 1 – Main opportunities and challenges of EMI implementation

Dimension	Main opportunities	Main challenges
Institutional	Access to international academic resources; participation in international academic activities	Uneven language preparedness; limited institutional support
Academic/professional	Improvement of academic English skills; development of reading and writing abilities	Difficulties in oral communication and classroom participation
Socio-cultural	Integration into global academic communities; intercultural interaction	Unequal participation among students with different English proficiency levels

As shown in Table 1, participants associated EMI with both significant academic opportunities and a number of challenges related to language preparedness, oral communication, and institutional support.

Institutional dimension. A substantial proportion of students reported that EMI provides access to international academic sources and contemporary teaching approaches that are less available in Kazakh or Russian. In particular, 85% of respondents stated that studying in English improved their understanding of academic content, while 63% indicated that it did not negatively affect the quality of instruction. Several respondents additionally emphasized that EMI encouraged more independent work with academic materials and increased their motivation to engage with international sources. Students noted that access to English-language literature allowed them to compare different academic perspectives and become more familiar with contemporary research developments in their fields of study.

This tendency is illustrated by the following student response:

“Studying in English gives me access to modern sources of information and international scientific articles. This helps me gain relevant knowledge that is difficult to find in Kazakh or Russian.” (2nd year student)

Faculty responses also highlighted institutional advantages of EMI. Many instructors associated EMI with opportunities for international publication and participation in academic conferences. However, some participants pointed to difficulties related to language proficiency:

“EMI allows me to publish internationally and participate in conferences. However, sometimes I feel that my language skills are not enough to fully express complex academic concepts.” (Social sciences lecturer, female, 43)

Academic and professional dimension. Most respondents noted that EMI contributes to the development of English language skills. Specifically, 68% of students and 83.9% of faculty observed improvements in students' proficiency, particularly in reading and writing. At the same time, oral communication remained a challenge for a number of students. Difficulties were reported particularly during oral presentations, classroom discussions, and spontaneous interaction in English. Some participants explained that they felt more confident when working with written academic materials than when expressing ideas verbally in front of peers and instructors.

As one instructor noted:

"I see significant progress in students, especially in their reading and academic writing skills. However, some of them lack confidence in oral communication." (Lecturer, female, 52)

Among instructors, 87.1% reported that they felt capable of teaching in English, although a noticeable proportion still expressed uncertainty about their language abilities. Students, in turn, identified oral presentations as one of the most demanding aspects of EMI:

"I have the greatest difficulty with oral presentations. Sometimes it is difficult to find the right words or express my thoughts, especially on complex topics." (2nd year student)

A notable difference was identified in perceptions of EMI's relevance for future careers. While 77.4% of teachers considered EMI an important factor for employability, only 38.6% of students shared this view. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 16.056$, $p < .001$) indicates that this difference is statistically significant. At the same time, several students acknowledged that EMI increased their awareness of international educational and professional opportunities, even if they did not yet feel fully prepared to function confidently in English-speaking academic or workplace environments.

This contrast is reflected in student feedback:

"I believe that EMI will help me get a job in an international company or abroad. However, my English skills are not yet at the level that would allow me to confidently apply for such positions." (3rd year student)

Socio-cultural dimension. In addition to academic outcomes, EMI was associated with broader socio-cultural benefits. Approximately 85% of students reported that studying in English enhanced their connection to the international academic community and expanded their social and educational opportunities. Participants also associated EMI with increased exposure to intercultural communication and greater openness to international academic experiences. For some students, studying in English symbolized participation in a broader educational space extending beyond the local university context.

One student described this experience as follows:

"EMI makes me feel part of a global community. I have the opportunity to participate in exchange programs and get acquainted with modern scientific approaches." (3rd year student)

At the same time, the results suggest that these benefits are not equally distributed. Students with higher levels of English proficiency reported greater engagement in international academic environments, while those with lower proficiency levels experienced more limited participation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that EMI is generally perceived as a valuable component of higher education internationalization in Kazakhstan. Consistent with previous research, access to global academic resources and opportunities for professional development emerge as key advantages of EMI.

Institutional dimension. The findings related to the institutional dimension suggest that EMI is largely perceived as a mechanism for expanding academic access and aligning local educational practices with global standards. The high proportion of students reporting improved access to international sources indicates that EMI functions not only as a medium of instruction, but also as a gateway to up-to-date academic knowledge that is often unavailable in local languages. This confirms the idea that language choice in higher education directly influences the scope and relevance of academic content.

At the same time, the fact that the majority of students did not associate EMI with a decline in instructional quality is particularly significant. It suggests that, despite the additional cognitive demands associated with studying in a second language, EMI does not necessarily compromise content comprehension when implemented within supportive learning environments. This finding challenges concerns frequently raised in the literature about the potential negative impact of EMI on subject mastery.

From the faculty perspective, EMI appears to be closely linked to professional positioning within the global academic community. Opportunities for international publication and participation in conferences are perceived as key institutional benefits, reinforcing the role of EMI in academic career development. In this sense, EMI contributes not only to student outcomes but also to the broader institutional agenda of internationalization.

However, the data also reveal an important tension. While EMI creates new professional opportunities, it simultaneously exposes limitations in language proficiency among faculty members. The reported difficulty in expressing complex disciplinary ideas suggests that linguistic competence remains a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of EMI. This indicates that institutional support should extend beyond policy implementation to include sustained professional development focused on academic language use.

Taken together, these findings highlight the dual nature of EMI at the institutional level: it acts as both an enabling and a constraining factor. On the one hand, it opens access to global knowledge and professional networks; on the other, it introduces new challenges that require targeted institutional responses. This underscores the need to view EMI not as a self-sufficient reform, but as a practice that depends on continuous support, adaptation, and alignment with the linguistic realities of both students and instructors.

These findings are broadly consistent with international EMI research conducted in Asian and Middle Eastern educational contexts, where EMI is frequently associated with institutional prestige, international visibility, and academic competitiveness. At the same time, similar studies also demonstrate that universities often underestimate the level of pedagogical and linguistic support required for sustainable EMI implementation. In the Kazakhstani context, these challenges become particularly complex because EMI develops within an already multilingual educational environment shaped by the coexistence of Kazakh, Russian, and English.

Another important issue concerns the sustainability of EMI implementation within multilingual universities. Although institutional policies may formally support the expansion of EMI programs, their long-term effectiveness depends on continuous adaptation to students' linguistic needs and classroom realities. If universities focus primarily on international visibility without strengthening pedagogical support, EMI risks becoming more symbolic than practically effective.

In this regard, institutional support should include not only language training, but also methodological assistance for instructors working in multilingual classrooms. The findings suggest that successful EMI implementation requires flexible teaching strategies capable of balancing disciplinary content with linguistic accessibility.

Academic and professional dimension. The findings related to the academic and professional dimension indicate that EMI plays a significant role in shaping students' language development, particularly in areas associated with academic literacy. The reported improvements in reading and writing skills suggest that EMI environments naturally expose students to disciplinary discourse and authentic academic materials, which supports the development of formal language competence. At

the same time, the persistent difficulties in oral communication point to an imbalance between receptive/productive written skills and spoken fluency.

This discrepancy may be explained by the nature of EMI instruction itself. In many cases, classroom practices tend to prioritize comprehension of written materials and completion of academic tasks, while opportunities for extended spoken interaction remain limited. As a result, students may develop passive language competence more rapidly than active communicative skills, particularly in high-stakes situations such as presentations.

From the instructors' perspective, the relatively high level of self-reported readiness to teach in English reflects a degree of adaptation to EMI requirements. However, the presence of lingering uncertainty suggests that language proficiency remains a dynamic and context-dependent factor rather than a fully achieved competence. The ability to deliver content in English does not always guarantee confidence in managing complex academic discussions, which may affect both teaching practices and classroom interaction.

One of the most notable findings is the divergence between students and faculty in their evaluation of EMI's relevance for future careers. While instructors tend to view EMI as a clear advantage in the global labor market, students appear more cautious in their expectations. This difference may stem from students' self-assessment of their current language abilities, which can limit their perception of EMI as an immediate professional resource.

At the same time, this gap may reflect a broader issue related to the alignment between educational practices and career preparation. If students do not feel sufficiently confident in applying their language skills beyond the classroom, the perceived value of EMI may remain abstract rather than practical. This suggests the need to strengthen the connection between EMI and employability through more explicit integration of career-oriented tasks and real-world communication scenarios.

Overall, the results highlight that while EMI supports academic language development, its professional impact is mediated by students' confidence, opportunities for active language use, and the extent to which programs are linked to future career pathways.

The findings also suggest that EMI should not be understood exclusively as a language-learning mechanism. Rather, it represents a broader academic environment in which students gradually develop disciplinary communication skills, academic literacy, and forms of professional self-presentation. However, these processes require time and continuous interaction in meaningful communicative settings. If EMI instruction remains heavily focused on passive comprehension and written assignments, students may experience difficulties transferring their language knowledge into active professional communication.

The findings additionally demonstrate that students' perceptions of EMI are closely connected to their level of communicative confidence. Even when participants recognize the academic and professional value of English-medium education, uncertainty in oral interaction may reduce their willingness to actively participate in classroom communication. This indicates that emotional and psychological dimensions of language use should also be considered within EMI environments.

Furthermore, the results suggest that EMI effectiveness depends not only on exposure to English, but also on the quality of interaction taking place in the classroom. Opportunities for discussion, collaborative tasks, and spontaneous communication appear to play an important role in helping students transform passive language knowledge into practical communicative competence.

Socio-cultural dimension. The socio-cultural findings suggest that EMI extends beyond academic outcomes and contributes to students' sense of belonging within a broader international academic space. The perception of being part of a global community indicates that EMI can play an important role in shaping academic identity, particularly in contexts where access to international networks is otherwise limited. In this sense, EMI functions not only as a medium of instruction, but also as a social and symbolic resource that connects students to global knowledge practices.

At the same time, the results reveal that this integration is not equally experienced by all students. Those with higher levels of English proficiency appear to benefit more fully from the opportunities associated with EMI, including participation in exchange programs and engagement

with international academic discourse. In contrast, students with lower proficiency levels tend to remain at the periphery of these experiences.

This uneven distribution of benefits highlights an important socio-cultural implication of EMI: while it has the potential to promote inclusion into global academic communities, it may also reproduce new forms of inequality within the classroom. Access to participation becomes closely tied to language competence, which can shape students' confidence, visibility, and sense of belonging.

These findings suggest that EMI should be approached with careful attention to its social consequences. Creating inclusive learning environments requires not only exposure to English, but also structured support that enables all students to actively participate in academic and intercultural communication. Without such support, the integrative potential of EMI may remain accessible only to a limited group of learners.

At the same time, the multilingual context of Kazakhstan creates conditions in which EMI does not function in isolation from other languages. Classroom communication often develops through flexible interaction between English, Kazakh, and Russian, particularly when students and instructors negotiate meaning or clarify complex disciplinary concepts. This demonstrates that multilingual practices may serve not as an obstacle to EMI, but as a resource supporting academic comprehension and participation.

Such findings support the idea that EMI in multilingual societies should not necessarily be viewed as a strictly monolingual educational model. Rather, effective EMI implementation may require recognition of the dynamic relationship between global academic communication and local linguistic realities.

From a broader perspective, the findings demonstrate that EMI in Kazakhstan reflects the ongoing transformation of higher education under conditions of globalization and multilingualism. English increasingly functions not only as a foreign language, but also as a medium through which universities position themselves within international academic networks. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of EMI depends on maintaining a balance between global academic integration and sensitivity to local linguistic and educational realities. In multilingual societies, successful EMI implementation requires flexible and inclusive approaches that support both academic development and equitable participation.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the prospects of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Kazakhstan's higher education system, focusing on institutional, academic/professional, and socio-cultural dimensions. The study was based on a mixed-methods approach combining survey data and interview responses from students and faculty.

The findings show that EMI is widely recognized by both students and instructors as a valuable tool for academic development and international integration. Students benefit from access to up-to-date academic resources, improved English proficiency, and opportunities for global engagement, while faculty members view EMI as a means of professional growth through participation in international research and academic networks.

At the same time, several challenges were identified. These include disparities in language preparedness, differences between student and teacher perceptions of EMI's relevance for future careers, and the need for stronger institutional support. In particular, difficulties in oral communication and limited confidence in language use remain significant barriers for a number of students, while instructors highlight the need for continuous language and pedagogical development.

The results suggest that further development of EMI in Kazakhstan requires targeted institutional measures. These include strengthening academic English training, integrating communication-oriented teaching practices, and enhancing the connection between EMI and career preparation. Future research may focus on long-term outcomes of EMI implementation and on developing context-sensitive approaches that better address the needs of diverse student groups.

The present study has several limitations. First, the research relied primarily on self-reported perceptions collected through questionnaires and interviews, which may not always fully reflect actual classroom practices or language proficiency levels. Second, the study did not include direct classroom observation or longitudinal tracking of EMI development over time.

Another limitation concerns the relatively limited disciplinary scope of the sample. Although participants represented both Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, EMI experiences may vary across other academic fields with different communicative and methodological demands.

Future studies may therefore explore discipline-specific EMI practices, classroom interaction patterns, and the relationship between EMI participation and academic performance. Longitudinal research may also provide a deeper understanding of how students' language confidence and professional perceptions develop throughout their university education.

Nevertheless, the study contributes to the growing discussion on EMI in multilingual higher education by demonstrating that the effectiveness of EMI depends not only on language policy itself, but also on the broader educational environment in which it is implemented. The findings highlight the importance of balancing internationalization goals with local linguistic realities and institutional support mechanisms. In this regard, EMI should be approached as a dynamic and context-sensitive educational practice that requires continuous adaptation to the needs of both students and instructors.

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Қазақстанның көптілді университеттерінде ағылшын тілінде оқытудың мүмкіндіктері
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Мақалада Қазақстанның көптілді университеттеріндегі ағылшын тілінде оқыту (ЕМІ) жүйесінің студенттер мен оқытушылар үшін ашатын мүмкіндіктері қарастырылады. Зерттеуге 252 студент пен 18 оқытушы қатысып, институционалдық, кәсіби-академиялық және әлеуметтік-мәдени аспектілер талданды. Студенттер халықаралық дереккөздерге қол жеткізу мен академиялық дағдыларды дамыту артықшылығын атап өтті, ал оқытушылар үшін ЕМІ халықаралық жарияланымдар мен кәсіби өсуге жол ашады. Сонымен қатар, кейбір студенттер ауызша сөйлеу кезінде қиындықтарға тап болатынын, ал кейбір оқытушылар өздерінің тілдік дағдыларына сенімсіз екенін жеткізді. Студенттер мен оқытушылар арасында ЕМІ-дің болашақ мансап үшін маңыздылығын әртүрлі бағалау байқалды. Осы қиындықтарға қарамастан, ЕМІ жалпы білім беруді интернационалдандырудың оң қадамы ретінде қабылданады. Қатысушылар бұл жүйе Қазақстан университеттерін жаһандық академиялық қоғамдастықпен байланыстыратынын мойындайды. Мақалада ЕМІ бағдарламаларының тиімділігін арттыру үшін институционалдық қолдауды және мақсатты оқытуды күшейту қажеттігі атап өтілген.

Кілт сөздер: ағылшын тілінде оқыту; көптілді білім беру; Қазақстандағы жоғары білім; академиялық ағылшын; білім беру интернационализациясы; студенттердің көзқарасы; институционалдық қолдау.

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Перспективы обучения на английском языке в многоязычных университетах Казахстана

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В статье рассматриваются возможности, которые открывает обучение на английском языке (EMI) для студентов и преподавателей в многоязычных университетах Казахстана. На основе анкетирования 252 студентов и интервью с 18 преподавателями анализируются институциональные, профессионально-академические и социокультурные аспекты EMI. Студенты отметили доступ к международным источникам и рост академических навыков, в то время как преподаватели видят в EMI возможность для публикаций и участия в международных конференциях. Однако некоторые студенты испытывают трудности в устной речи, а часть преподавателей не чувствуют достаточной уверенности в использовании английского языка. Также выявлены различия в восприятии значимости EMI для будущей карьеры: преподаватели оценивают её выше, чем студенты. Несмотря на это, EMI в целом воспринимается как шаг к интернационализации образования. Участники подчёркивают, что такой формат обучения способствует интеграции казахстанского высшего образования в мировое научное сообщество. В статье подчёркивается важность усиления институциональной поддержки и адресного обучения для повышения эффективности EMI-программ.

Ключевые слова: обучение на английском языке; многоязычное образование; высшее образование в Казахстане; академический английский; интернационализация образования; восприятие студентов; институциональная поддержка.

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