

## Developing Russian Phd Students' Academic Culture in EAP Courses for International Communication and Co-Operation

Victoria V. Safonova

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences,  
professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Area Studies  
Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

### Abstract

The paper gives a didactic insight into the concept of "intercultural academic communication" /IAC/ analyzing its types, forms, structure and bilingual input for the purposes of improving Russian advanced students' communication skills as intercultural speakers and writers in English-speaking academic settings. On the basis of the 2015-2017 cross-cultural analysis of Russian Master's Degree & PhD Students' experiences of intercultural communication it provides a didactically-oriented and competency-based classification of communicative barriers to effective cross-cultural academic communication, describing such of them as linguistic, pragmatic, sociocultural, cognitive and visual communication barriers. The paper argues that the theoretical framework for designing tasks aiming at improving PhD students' bilingual pluricultural competence to use English as a lingua franca in intercultural academic settings is to be based on L. Vygotsky's cultural historical theory, A.N Leontiev's activity theory, A.A. Leontiev's psychological theory of communication, S. Hall's theory of cultural factors and contexts and culturally-oriented FLT approaches to developing students' bilingual academic competences on a multidisciplinary basis. The paper concludes with some recommendations on creating a hierarchical set of multidisciplinary problem-solving tasks and activities specifically designed to help PhD students meet new 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges of intercultural communication & co-operation, avoiding culture-bound academic pitfalls in today's extremely complicated world. Among these tasks are those that involve PhD students' into: a) observing and generalizing the similarities and differences of communicative and/or cognitive academic schemata in Russian and in English; b) classifying communicative barriers between intercultural speakers or writers (incl. English native & non-native speakers); c) interpreting the appropriacy of academic products in a FL from a global intercultural perspective; d) making suggestions for necessary pluricultural academic self-education in order to be able to foresee and/or identify communication barriers and find effective communicative tools to bridge intercultural academic gaps; e) doing thought-provoking case-studies in IAC; f) transforming interculturally inappropriate academic products in a FL into appropriate ones; g) group role-playing of IAC schema modes involving different academic roles that are typical of English-speaking international science co-operation settings; h) doing "Study & Innovate" projects.

**Keywords:** intercultural academic communication, academic culture, cross-cultural barriers, multidisciplinary problem-solving tasks, ELT.

### Introduction

It is a well-known fact that a marked increase of international scholarly co-operation between Russian researchers and researchers from other countries has been taken place in the country since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the last twenty five years many Russian universities, especially research universities, have done much to encourage and promote international partnerships, collaboration and co-operation in research and education (Frumina & West, 2012). In 2016 V. Kaganov, the former deputy minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, in his speech "The Role of Russian Educational Policy and International Scientific and Educational Co-operation in the Development of Innovation and the Formation of "Knowledge Triangle"(2004) ,stated that in Russia the situation in these fields is characterized by: (a) the active participation of Russian educational and scientific organisations within the international partnership in the framework

of the European Union's programs and the program "Horizon 2020" and Shanghai Co-operation Organisation's international scientific and educational programs; (b) the creation of the BRICS Network University within the research and Innovation initiative of the BRICS, which includes the implementation of mega-science projects, large-scale national programs, and also the development of joint research and innovation platform; (c) the co-operation of Russian universities with a number of international organizations and international projects (Kaganov, 2016, p.2-3). All these steps made a great impact on developing and, then, renewing Russian Higher Education Standards in 2016-2017 in general, and on choosing new approaches to designing Master's and PhD's educational programmes, in particular. Quite recently, Russian universities have been widely discussing the Pan-European ideas and concepts of Open Education, Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World (The Three Os: Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World, 2016; G7 Science Ministry Ministers' Communiqué, 2017) and how to implement them into training Russian researchers for effective international academic communication (Artamonova, Demchuk, Kagneev, Safonova, 2018).

As English has been for a long time a lingua franca in the world of international science across the globe (including contemporary Open Education and Open Science fields), there are no doubts that it should be taught as a lingua franca of international research co-operation and collaboration, and not only with native English speakers, but with non-native English speakers as well. And that necessitates developing a pluricultural model of tertiary language education, involving teaching English for academic purposes /EAP/ with cross-cultural or pluricultural input. And though some steps have been made in EAP in terms of exploring cultural clashes experienced by international students, for example in the UK and other English-speaking countries (Jordan, 1997; Brick, 2006; Etherington, 2013), nevertheless the EAP methodology in general has not been fully oriented yet towards the real needs of postgraduates to become *proficient intercultural academic speakers and writers, and experienced researchers* in a globalized, increasingly digitalized multilingual and multicultural world of academic communication, and besides this, some national modifications of teaching EAP, for example, in Russia, are only on the way of forming linguacultural and methodological basis for solving contemporary educational EAP problems faced in its various educational contexts.

Speaking about the linguacultural basis for teaching & Learning EAP in Russia, it seems worth mentioning that it presupposes to be formed on the results of a didactically oriented analysis of barriers to academic communication that have been faced by Russian postgraduates and postdocs in different settings of formal and informal academic communication, because in a number of works on comparative studies of sociocultural characteristics of academic communication in different cultural settings (see e.g. Jordan, 1997; Sternin, 2009; Etherington, 2013) it has been convincingly proved that sometimes international educational co-operation and research collaboration may be not effective enough because of sociocultural differences in educational, academic or research cultures (Sternin, 2009; Safonova, 2015). And as such, the latter often provoke communication gaps and barriers to efficient and successful academic communication. In other words, it seems reasonable that Russian EAP Methodology should be developed in the context of pluricultural approach (CEFR, 2001; CEFR/CV, 2018), trying to give a clear view of what the most common types of barriers Russian postgraduate students may come across in international settings of academic communication worldwide, how to make them aware of these barriers & teach them to overcome them, at what level of tertiary education and self-education it seems most appropriately to be done and what approaches are to be used in Russian various educational contexts in order to develop step-by-step postgraduates' academic culture. Due to the considerations mentioned above, this paper discusses the concept of intercultural academic culture, focuses on providing a didactically-oriented classification of communicative barriers to Russian PhD students' effective international academic communication and gives some recommendations on designing problem-solving tasks to be used in the university classroom to help postgraduate students adopt proper communication strategies to overcome communication gaps in international academic contexts.

## Literature Review

In the mid-1970s and early-1980s the concept of "English for Academic Purposes" was introduced into the British language methodology (Jordan, 1997) and since that time the EAP methodology has become a challenging research field not only in the UK, but across the world. Its rapid development as a branch of ESP (Jordan, 1997) has been caused to a considerable extent by the intensive Internationalization and globalization of the world economy and all other spheres of human life, and, accordingly, the internationalization of Higher Education in which English functions as an academic lingua franca (Whong, 2009). Nowadays EAP is taught worldwide in a variety of sociocultural and didactic contexts (Alexander, O. Argent, S. Spencer, J. 2008). Within the last two decades much has been done in establishing the theoretical framework for teaching EAP at tertiary level (see. e.g. Alexander, Argent, Spencer, 2008; Hyland, 2009) and improving classroom practices to help

university students develop their academic voice in English (Brick, 2009). The studies undertaken over the last forty years in EAP provide us with:

some definitions of EAP as a complex many-sided discipline (Jordan, 1997; Alexander, Argent & Spencer, 2008; Kemp, 2017) and special emphasis in these definitions is put on EAP interdisciplinary nature (Etherington, 2011; Bruce, 2015);

the relatively new methodological concepts of "general EAP" and "specific EAP" (Hyland, 2011, pp.14-15) which are crucial for designing EAP curricula/syllabi and teaching materials for an endless variety of EAP educational contexts and settings in a close collaboration between language teachers and profile subjects teachers (Hyland, 2011);

methodology appropriate to EAP that has been developed within a communication-oriented, learner-centered and specific-profile-oriented paradigm of university language education (Jordan, 1997, pp. 109-125);

linguadidactic basis for teaching academic reading (see, e.g., Jordan, 1997; Alexander, Argent & Spencer 2008, academic listening and speaking (see, e.g., Jordan, 1997; Brick, 2006; Alexander et.al.2008; Bruce, 2015), academic writing (see, e.g., Jordan, 1997; Alexander et.al., 2008; Hyland, 2009; Bruce, 2015) and some integrated communicative and cognitive skills (Bruce, 2015);

a product-based approach (Jordan,1997), a process-based approach (Jordan, 1997), a genre-based approach (Brick, 2006, Hyland, 2009; Bruce, 2015) and a corpus-based approach (Bruce, 2015) to developing university students' academic skills related to their academic language competence in English and research powers in their specific profile fields of research;

much evidence of some cultural or cross-cultural challenges (Jordan,1997, Brick, 2006; Sternin, 2009; Etherington, 2011; Okamoto, 2015; Sarmadi, Nouri, Zandi, Lavasani, 2017) facing international postgrate students which could not and should not be ignored in the theory and practices of teaching EAP.

The methodological findings on academic culture (Jordan,1997, Brick, 2006; Okamoto, 2015; Sarmadi et.al., 2017) have raised a very important question about broadening the objectives and scope of EAP as a discipline or a number of interrelated subjects. These EAP studies have given special attention to the conceptualization of the notion of academic culture, considering it as a prerogative of any didactic model aiming at developing students' efficient academic skills and appropriate academic behaviours. But the thing is what we mean by academic culture , because in the EAP research field the concept may refer to:

some universal characteristics of academic culture (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Brown & Coombe, 2015) and its structural components (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008);

cultural/sociocultural characteristics of a particular academic culture in a particular culture -bound educational context (Jordan, 1997, Ballard & Clanchy 1984, 1991; Sternin, 2009);

levels of academic culture, such as a macro level (national science policy, Institutional infrastructure, mission of academics in society, academic knowledge in society) and a micro level (academic discourse practices, publication practices, managing academic activities, knowledge acquisition practices, discipline practices) (Okamoto, 2015);

special relations in academic world, including hierarchy / status, gender, nationality / ethnicity (Okamoto, 2015);

discipline-specific academic subcultures, for example, the paper "Culture Shock? Genre Shock?" by Feak (2011) argues that though a larger academic culture exists, international students should realize that different disciplines need to be viewed as sub-cultures with their specific values, processes, and world of value (Feak, 2011, p. 43-44).

Referring to the last point, we could agree that these discipline-specific academic subcultures may be associated with the concept of academic culture (native or no-native), but at the same time we should not overestimate their role in academic settings, and, accordingly, in EAP methodologies. In truth, what is really badly needed is a much broader conceptualization of academic culture in EAP methodology, the one that was firstly put forward by Jordan in 1997. According to Jordan , "Academic culture consists of a shared experience and outlook with regard to the educational system, the subject or discipline, and the conventions associated with it." (Jordan,1997 p.98). While reinforcing the ideas expressed in the cited definition of academic culture further , Jordan finds it necessary to focus on such elements (that are related, from his point of view, to academic culture) as: a) academic cultural clashes recorded in different British educational contexts as a

consequences of existing differences in educational background and cultural background between native teaching staff and non-native Master's and PhD Students (Jordan, 1997, p.99-101), and b) academic conventions ( a clear understanding of academic hierarchy, academic verbal and non-verbal behavior schemas ) that are to be followed by international students in a culturally new academic context (Jordan, 1997, p. 101-103). Jordan's EAP assumptions were based on his brief analysis of the research findings reported by Thorp (1991), Coleman (1997), Holliday (1994) in their works and the research findings presented in his own study as well (Jordan,1997). All the findings and experiences in EAP discussed by Jordan lay reasonable grounds for drawing the scholars' attention to the necessity of designing a set of culture-bound courses including not only those that relate to the modes of academic behavior in the UK, but also those that help international students adapt themselves to the new cultural settings in different spheres of communication in the country. His suggestions on designing a course in British (Cultural) Studies may serve as an example of the courses dealing with general aspects of the host country.

Jordan's ideas and approaches to developing students' academic culture are almost entirely based on his understanding of EAP problems that have been identified in the so-called anglophone educational contexts, in other words, in the UK universities and other universities within the Inner Circle of English (Kachru, 1996). Meanwhile, nowadays teaching EAP has also entered the non-anglophone zone within not only the Outer Circle of English, but the Expanding Circle of English (Kachru, 1996) as well, for example, in Russia. And recently in some top Russian universities EAP has started being taught through a set of interlinked subject-specific language courses with some linguacultural bilingual input. These courses have been designed to increase Russian postgraduates' employability skills and opportunities in the country and worldwide by developing their academic culture on an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural or pluricultural basis. Russian educationalists have come to a consensus that EAP courses should be designed with the view to developing postgraduate students' awareness of:

global characteristics of academic communication (that is to a great extent a westernized Pan-European mode of academic patterns of perception, interaction and production);

an international code of ethics in academic research:

global academic & business academic etiquette;

universal and specific academic practices in Russian academic communities and other linguacultural communities across the global:

international research culture in comparisons with Russian & other academic and research cultures.

In other words, the EAP in Russia is mostly focused on internationalized academic communication as a specific phenomenon of the today's globalized, internationalized and digitalized academic world, but all the same the teaching of EAP in the country should not and would not ignore multicultural nature and pluricultural realities of contemporary academic communication.

Not once has it been proved by scholars that academic clashes and communicative and/or cognitive barriers to effective academic communication can substantially impair students' academic achievements at university (Coleman, 1987; Jordan, 1997; Ballard and Clanchy, 1984, Holliday, 1994; 1991; Sternin, 2009; Feak, 2011) and their after-university professional life, however, these barriers have not been given a necessary methodological consideration in the EAP didactics yet, because till that time these barriers have been mostly studied in such fields of human knowledge as communicative linguistics (see, e.g., Sternin, 2009; Bogatikova, 2009) and cross-cultural or pluricultural studies, especially in business (see e.g. Gibson, 2002). But could we really nowadays move on in developing postgraduates' academic culture without making postgraduate students aware of those cultural clashes and barriers that they may come across in intercultural academic communication? Could we really train them for being efficient and competitive professionals and researchers without involving them in foreseeing, identifying and solving general and specific cultural academic problems that may often face them when they are involved in cross-cultural or pluricultural academic interaction? And could that be done without exploring and classifying the cultural difficulties experienced by postgraduates in a particular country's educational context or in a pluricultural environments?

### **3. Discussion**

#### **3.1. Conceptualizing the notions of academic communication and intercultural academic communication**

As has been mentioned before, the focus of EAP methodologists in anglophone contexts is on academic communication (mostly formal) related to scholastic environments. In Russia, meanwhile, especially when referring to intercultural academic communication, it is thought necessary to give a broader interpretation and conceptualization of academic communication with the view to bringing global perspectives into Russian cross-cultural / pluricultural tertiary education and into postgraduates' bilingual/trilingual and pluricultural developments through Russian and English (plus any other foreign/second language), educating them as intercultural academic speakers and writers able to act in various national and international academic settings. Thus, international academic communication is understood as one of the spheres of professional intercultural communication that is related to scholastic environments and to research environments as well in which specifically structured verbal and non-verbal patterns of academic behavior are followed in English, general and specific characteristics of different academic discourse communities are taken into consideration while a) perceiving, collecting and evaluating academic information, b) producing academic products and reflecting on their quality, c) interacting in intercultural academic settings with native and non-native English speakers as representatives of cultural and/or subcultural and/or linguacultural academic communities, and d) using academic mediation activities (if the latter are required in particular academic situations for effective international collaboration and active academic co-operation).

The 2015-2017 survey results of 46 Russian Arts & Humanities postdocs' showed that among the biggest problems facing them in international academic settings were as follows:

**Listening comprehension difficulties**, because some times they could not concentrate on the academic issues that were raised, discussed or argued because of :

a variety of Englishes used by the speakers (75% of the respondent) ;

sociocultural terminological lacunas used by the academics (50 %) ;

cross-cultural differences in research methodology, results delivery & their evaluation (91%).

**Speaking difficulties in formal academic settings.** These problems often occurred in formal oral academic communication and they were due to:

conceptual (including terminological) lacunas provoking academic misunderstanding between Russian academics and some other representatives of the English-speaking audience (84 %) ;

sociocultural differences in English-speaking conventions of formal academic communications (e. g., in academic public speaking) and informal academic interactions (75 %).

**Speaking difficulties in informal academic settings.** They often occur in the situations of informal academic communication and they were caused by the lack of the required knowledge and skills for being good at small talks (and not only academic ones) and lack of confidence in themselves in English informal academic environment (85%).

**Writing difficulties.** Writing problems occurred mostly when the postdocs were to answer the calls for abstracts and papers this or that international conference, not missing the deadline, and, then, to structure their presentation texts in accordance with the conference requirements. These difficulties were mostly caused by postdocs' lack of knowledge on producing the academic genres mentioned above (75 %) in English in accordance with the international structural and content requirements.

**Behavioral verbal and non-verbal difficulties that were caused by:**

existing differences in understanding & following some sociocultural codes and schemas of academic interaction that have been established in Russian and English academic communities for years & years (86 %) ;

the lack of experience in foreseeing or identifying and overcoming verbal and/or non-verbal misunderstandings that often led to break-downs in academic communication;

the lack of mediating skills to repair academic communication breakdowns (92%).

### 3.2. Classifying cross-cultural/pluricultural barriers to international academic communication

Conceptually, there should be a clear differentiation between the notion of communicative barriers as regularly occurred and may be easily recorded in communication and the notion of communication break-downs that may have an occasional character.

In contrast to occasional communication breakdowns, communication barriers can be defined as a permanently fixed cross-cultural phenomena that can be regularly watched, identified (and if necessary & possible recorded) whenever it occurs in the formal or informal situations and settings of intercultural communication and destroys the latter. Barriers may occur in communication because speakers or writers do not share similar discourse modes of thinking , verbal and non-verbal behavioural schemas, sociocultural traditions and values.

In terms of competence-based pluricultural approach (CEFR, 2001: CEFR/CV, 2018) communication barriers can be classified into a) linguistic barriers (including lexical., grammatical, semantic, phonological and orthographical barriers) , b) pragmatic barriers ( including discourse, functional and behavioral-scheme barriers) , c) sociocultural barriers (including cultural, sociolinguistic, ideological and ethical barriers), d) cognitive barriers and c) visual barriers (Safonova,2017). The diagrams below give some comparative information on the types of barriers that were named by MDs Students and PhD students from their own experiences .What do these diagrams say?

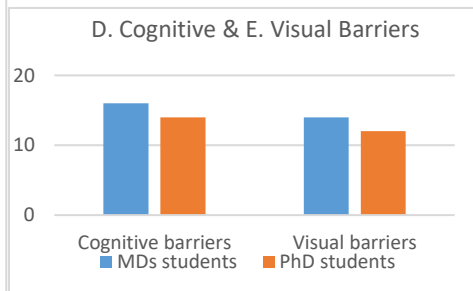
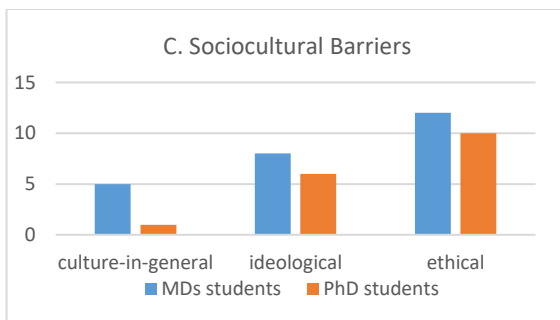
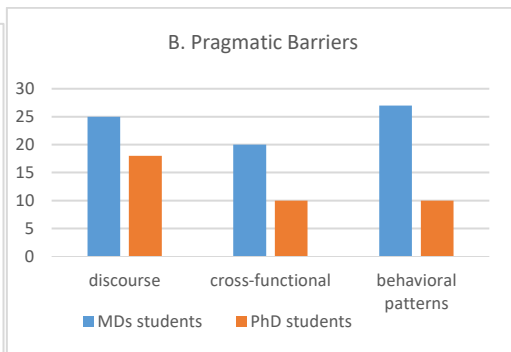
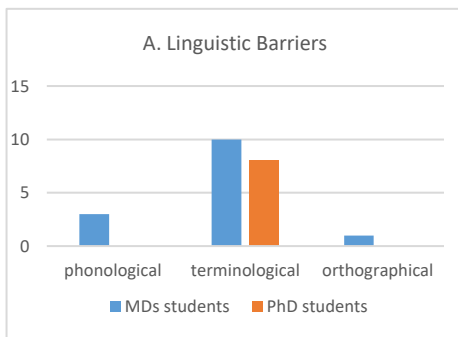
**Diagrams A-D**

**The 2015-2017 Survey Interview Results: Types of Communication Barriers (to Effective Intercultural Academic Communication) Named by Russian MDs and PhD Students Specializing In Linguistics , Intercultural Communication and FL Methodology)**

MDs Students = 28 Respondents

PhD student = 26 Respondents

**Types Of Barriers to Academic Communication**



First, these diagrams show that linguistic barriers (with the exception of terminological ones with reference to MDs students) do occur far less in their actual intercultural academic interactions than pragmatic and sociocultural barriers or cognitive and visual barriers. Second, if there was an expected difference between MDs Students and PhD students concerning how often they could face linguistic barriers, but in terms of the frequency of the appearance of pragmatic and especially sociocultural barriers in their academic communication it was a rather surprising situation because no really noticeable differences between MDs students and PhD students had been recorded, despite the fact that these two groups of postgraduates represent different levels of tertiary education. And, finally, these diagrams give us an indirect support to the ideas expressed earlier in the paper that barriers to intercultural academic communication should be carefully studied in the EAP methodologies with a Pan-European dimension, especially oriented towards postgraduate levels.

The data on PhD students' experiences in EAP and their self-assessment of the skills under consideration is given in tables 1-3.

**Table 1**

PhD Students' activities IN ENGLISH as Intercultural speakers	Data on Russian PhD Students' Experiences in EAP Respondents= 26 Russian PhD Students			Self-Assessment Data	
	I have got enough experience in doing this activity	I have very little experience in doing this activity	I have not got any experience in doing this activity	I can easily do this	I can do this, but not always successfully
Giving a speech on subjects of general interest	10	8	10	3	15
Giving a presentation on their research findings	18	2	6	-	14
Giving a lecture on an academic subject in English-speaking settings	5	12	9	-	17
Asking questions during a lecture	3	6	7	-	3
Answering lecturer's questions during an interactive lecture	7	7	Not willing to do	1	5
Conducting interviews for research purposes	1	-	25	-	1
Delivering a conference paper	2	-	-	-	2
Presenting a report on research project results	12	6	8	-	12
Taking part in informal discussion on the topics of general interests	21	5	-	12	14
Taking part in academic small talks (e.g. during conference coffee-breaks)	7	5	14	-	7
Taking part in an academic discussion	5	4	17	-	9
Acting as a member of the debate audience	2	-	-	-	-
Acting as the debate proposer/opposer	-	-	-	-	-

This data, though the number of respondent is not very large, still gives us some food for thought. First, the most part of the respondents didn't have much experience to use English even in traditional academic activities. Second, academic discussions and academic debates being very important academic activities are somehow their terra incognita. And finally, it seems, that the most of the respondents have hardly been involved in any real international academic co-operation or collaboration when English might have been used as a lingua franca of science, but without their real participation in international conferences and projects it is hardly possible for them to gain a valuable academic experience how to collaborate and co-operate efficiently with other academics and researchers.



**Table 2**

PhD Students' activities IN English as Intercultural Writers	Data on PhD Students' Experiences Respondents= 26 PhD Students			Self-Assessment Data	
	I have got enough experience in doing this activity	I have very little experience in doing this activity	I have not got any experience in doing this activity	I can easily do this	I can do this, but not always
Writing lecture notes	23	3	-	15	10
Writing a presentation text of a lecture	12	5	9	6	6
Writing lecture diaries	-	3	23	-	3
Writing critical essay	10	7	9	6	4
Writing case-study essay	-	-	-	-	-
Writing case-study report	-	-	-	-	-
Writing a site visit report	-	-	-	-	-
Constructing questionnaires	-	-	-	-	-
Filling in the registration conference form	26	-	-	25	-
Writing resume	23	3	-	19	4
Writing conference abstracts	12	7	7	4	8
Writing research papers	4	2	20	-	4
Writing reviews on academic papers	3	7	16	-	3
Writing an application for the research writing	-	2	22	-	2
Writing research proposals	-	-	26	-	-
Writing research questions	5	4	17	-	2
Writing a literature review	-	5	21	-	5
Writing about research findings	-	5	21	-	3
Writing research reports	-	-	-	-	-
Critiquing the research of others	-	-	-	-	-
Writing on controversial academic topics	10	2	14	-	5

The data given in Table 2 also indicates the lack of the respondents' experience in doing regularly various types of academic and research writing in English. Partly it is because of the fact that some types of academic writing are not peculiar to Russian academic culture (e.g. writing lecture diaries, case-studies, essays and reports, applications for the research, research questions, and the like). And even if some types of academic writing are used in Russian academic culture (e.g. conference abstracts, conference papers, research reports, thesis), their structural composition and discourse characteristics are quite different from the similar writings in English, especially if we compare discourse schemas and stringency of academic requirements to academic products in Russian-speaking and English-speaking academic communities.

In the group of sociocultural barriers, *ethnocentric, cross-cultural and sub-cultural constraints* are quite noticeable in all spheres of cross-cultural communication, as for *ideological* barriers or barriers provoked by differences in world outlook, *pluricultural and metacultural barriers*, it is in the political, academic and management spheres of intercultural communication that they manifest themselves most strongly. It is also worth mentioning in passing that cognitive barriers in academic communication may be caused not only by some cultural factors, but they can be easily provoked if the level of information culture of some members of the project group is rather low, for example, there are communication partners who are unable to articulate clearly their information needs and are unaware of reliable information sources, and/or who demonstrate poor search skills and inability to deal with information overload. In this case, information and intellectual spaces in academic environments are being distorted and that leads, in its turn, to cognitive misunderstandings, inconsistencies in intellectual actions and academic communication breakdowns.

While answering interview questions, some students who once studied abroad, made comments on what might have helped them in their preparation for studying abroad more effectively. And among these comments were such as:



*It might have been much easier to study abroad if Russian universities offered pre-exchange online courses in academic written and spoken communication with the view to our studying in a particular country and a particular destination university.*

*Online courses in Comparative Cross-Cultural Studies in Academic communication might be really helpful, something like Russian-French or Russian-Swedish or Russian-Norwegian Comparative studies.*

*Additional cross-cultural academic training is surely needed to help us to avoid cultural pitfalls in administrative communication, informal academic communication, not only formal academic communication.*

The data in table 3 indicates that till that time mediation skills have not been given a proper place in Russian PhD programmes, and I believe, not only in Russia, because you can hardly find a section on developing mediation skills at tertiary levels in any EAP methodology books (see, e.g. Jordan, 1997), not to speak about EAP courses (see, e.g., Alexander, et al., 2008).

**Table 3**

	DATA ON RUSSIAN PHD STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES Respondents= 26 PhD Students			SELF-ASSESSMENT DATA	
	I have got enough experience in doing this activity	I have very little experience in doing this activity	I have not got any experience In doing this activity	I can easily do this	I can do this, but not always successfully
PHD STUDENTS AS INTERCULTURAL MEDIATORS					
Mediating a text	1	-	25	-	1
Mediating concepts	3	3	20	-	4
Acting as an intermediary in informal everyday situations	19	6	10	-	8
Acting as an intermediary in informal academic situations (academic small talks)	3	2	-	-	3
Acting as an intermediary in formal academic situations	2	-	24	-	2
Facilitating pluricultural space in the situations of everyday communication	10	6	10	-	5
Facilitating pluricultural space in university situations	2	0	-24	-	2
Facilitating pluricultural space in academic situations	1	-	25	-	1
Facilitating pluricultural space in research situations	-	-	-	-	-
Translating for academic purposes	14	8	4	-	16
Interpreting in academic environments	3	-	-23	-	3

**3.3. Designing a hierarchical set of multidisciplinary problem-solving tasks and activities for developing PhD students' academic culture on cross-cultural/pluricultural basis**

The findings on the communication barriers to effective intercultural academic communication that occur between Russian PhD students /postdocs and other representatives of academic linguacultural communities quite obviously indicate that the EAP methodology specialists involved in designing and implementing Arts & Humanities postgraduate programmes in Russia should reconsider the existing EAP theoretical framework and teaching & learning practices in order to make university language education capable of developing PhD students as:

bilingual intercultural speakers who are active & interactive academic listeners, flexible, confident & professionally interesting speakers, and who are aware of verbal and nonverbal barriers in international communication and are able to overcome them;

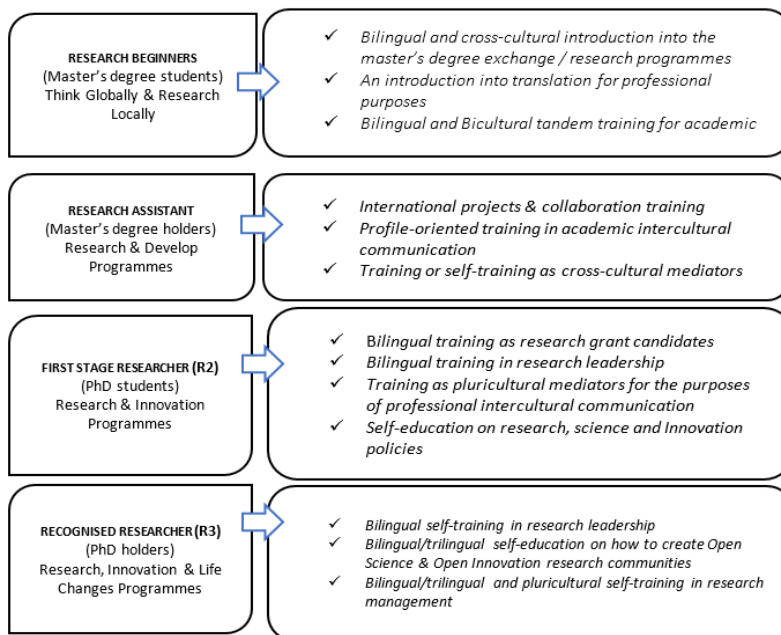
intercultural academic writers with advanced writing academic skills necessary for being able to produce academic products relating to general and subject-specific academic genres;

academic mediators who are able to mediate academic texts, theories and core concepts underlying them, academic communications and to apply appropriate mediation strategies (CEFR/CV, 2018);

international researchers who are able to act in academic settings across the globe in accordance with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017).

The theoretical framework for designing tasks aiming at improving postgraduate students' bilingual pluricultural competence to use English as a lingua franca in intercultural academic settings is to be based on L. Vygotsky's cultural historical theory (1934, 1991), A.N Leontiev's activity theory (1975), A.A. Leontiev's psychological theory of communication (1999), S. Hall's theory of cultural factors (1971, 1980) and contexts and culturally-oriented FLT approaches, for example, pluricultural approach (CEFR, 2001; CEFR/CV, 2018) or sociocultural approach (Safonova, 1996) or culture-sensitive approach (Holliday, 1994) to developing students' bilingual academic competences on a multidisciplinary basis. Besides, the implementation of these goals in the training model of postgraduates as international researchers through co-learned languages (Russian, English and other FL) presupposes the development of a system of interlinked courses in teaching Russian and English (and any other FL) for academic purposes, Cultural Studies in Academic Communication and subject-specific theoretical tandem courses that are read in the co-learned languages. This system should be an instrument for adopting global perspective on training postgraduates as international research collaborators. The chart below shows some possible correlations between the European researcher's status (Towards a European Framework for Research Carriers, 2011) and researchers' intercultural bilingual activities.

**Chart 4. Global Perspectives in Researchers' Bilingual and Intercultural Development**



With the view to achieving the global goals mentioned above in Russia, what is suggested in the country as a didactic instrument for developing academic culture is a hierarchical set of multidisciplinary problem-solving tasks and activities specifically designed to help Russian PhD students meet new 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges of intercultural communication & co-operation, avoiding culture-bound academic pitfalls in today's extremely complicated world. Among are those that involve PhD students' into: 1) observing and generalizing the similarities and differences of communicative and/or cognitive academic schemata in Russian and in English; 2) classifying communicative barriers between intercultural speakers or writers (incl. English native & non-native speakers); 3) interpreting the appropriacy of academic products in a FL from a global perspective and/or an intercultural perspective; 4) making suggestions for necessary pluricultural academic self-education in order to be able to foresee and/or identify communication barriers and find effective communicative tools to bridge intercultural academic gaps; 5) doing thought-provoking case-studies in intercultural academic communication; 6) transforming interculturally inappropriate academic products in a FL into appropriate ones; 7) group role-playing of IAC schema modes involving different academic roles that are typical of English-speaking international science co-operation settings; 8) academic and research simulations, 9) doing "Study & Innovate" projects involving PhD Students from other

countries and discussing their results at Young Researchers' Forums, 10) organizing interdisciplinary conferences of Arts & Humanities PhD students with academic debates.

Some of the tasks mentioned above (1-4) may be introduced into EAP courses much earlier, starting with Master's Degree programmes and even sometimes with Bachelor's programmes, because, in truth, what we really need is a three-level EAP system.

A pre-condition for designing interdisciplinary problem solving tasks listed above is a comparative cross-cultural analysis /CCA/ of academic communications, first, cross-cultural, then, pluricultural, in Russian and in English. The CCA data can provide much food for thought in terms of : a) hypothesising schemas underlying a particular academic event in official and unofficial modes of professional intercultural communication in English; b) outlining relevant verbal and non-verbal intercultural speakers' resources & strategies; c) making decisions on the professional core knowledge and macro skills (with detailing a set of micro skills for each of them) that may be developed and then internally assessed in the Russian university classroom. And now it is high time to do this job without which it is hardly possible to bring real innovations into teaching EAP with global perspectives in Russia.

### Conclusions and Implications

The teaching of EAP in Russia is undergoing serious changes with new challenges in developing Russian bilingual/trilingual researchers in the context of Open Education, Open Science and Open to the world. What has been discussed in this paper is only a beginning of introducing changes into the EAP/FLAP methodology in this country. Further researches in the field under consideration are planned to go on with collecting data on academic barriers (in order to get statistically reliable data), to focus on a detailed comparative cultural analysis of academic products that are expected to be professionally produced by postgraduate students at different tertiary levels and by postdocs, to develop evaluation instruments for measuring intercultural academic competence relating to four modes of academic communication: perception, interaction, production, mediation (CEFR/CV, 2018). Again the results of comparative cultural analysis of academic discourse could provide grounds for outlining academic-life based assessment criteria & designing multi-level scales for measuring core verbal & non-verbal skills that are crucial to intercultural academic communication.

### References

- [1] Alexander, O., Argent, S., & Spencer, J. (2008). *EAP essentials: A teachers guide to principles and practice*. Reading: Garnet Publishing.
- [2] Artamonova, J.D., Demchuk, A.L., Kameev, A.N., & Safonova, V.V. (2018). Modern Strategies for Science Development and Research Training Improvement: International eExperience. *Higher Education in Russia*,(4), 135-148. (In Russian)
- [3] Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. (1984). *Study abroad. A Manual for Asian Studies*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malasia Sdn, Berhad.
- [4] Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. (1991). *Teaching students from Overseas*. Longman, Cheshire.
- [5] Bergquist, W. H. & Pawlak, K., (2008). *Engaging the Six Cultures of the Academy: Revised and expanded edition of The Four Cultures of the Academy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- [6] Bogatikova, L.I. (2009). *The basics of intercultural communication: Lecture texts for students of the specialisations 1- 02 03 06 01 "English language. German language", 1- 02 03 06 02 "English language. French language"*. Gomel: Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus; Francisk Skorina Gomel State University. (In Russian)
- [7] Borg, S. (2013). *Teacher Research in Language Teaching: A Critical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Brick, J. (2006). *Academic Culture: A student's guide to studying at university*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University.
- [9] Brown, J. D., & Coombe, C. (Eds.). (2015). *The Cambridge guide to research in language teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Bruce, J. (2015). *Theory and Concepts for English For Academic Purposes*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [11] CEFR, Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, teaching, assessment. (2001) Cambridge: CUP.
- [12] Coleman, H. (1987) Teaching Spectacles and Learning Festivals. *ELT Journal*. 41 (2), 97-103.
- [13] Etherington, S. (Ed.). (2011). *Proceedings of the 2009 BALEAP conference: English for specific academic purposes*. Reading: Garnet Education
- [14] Feak, Ch.B.. (2011) Culture Shock? Genre Shock? *Proceedings of the 2009 BALEAP conference: English for specific academic purposes*. Edited by S. Etherington. Reading: Garnet Education, 35-45.
- [15] Frumina, E., West, R. (2012). *Internationalisation of Russian Higher Education: The English Language Dimension*. Moscow: British Council, March 12. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.britishcouncil.ru/sites/default/files/internationalisation\\_of\\_russian\\_higher\\_education.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.ru/sites/default/files/internationalisation_of_russian_higher_education.pdf)
- [16] G7 Science Ministry Ministers' Communiqué. (2017). Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [http://www.g7italy.it/sites/default/files/documents/G7\\_Science\\_Communiq e.pdf](http://www.g7italy.it/sites/default/files/documents/G7_Science_Communiq e.pdf)

- [17] Gibson, R. (2002). *Intercultural business communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Hall, S. (1971). *Deviancy, Politics and the Media*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
- [19] Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/Decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Wills (Eds.), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79* (pp. 57-72). London: Hutchinson.
- [20] Holliday, A. (1994). *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [21] Hyland, K. (2009). *Teaching and Researching Writing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Harlow: Longman, Person Education Limited.
- [22] Hyland, K. (2011). Discipline and Divergence: Evidence of Specificity in EAP. *Proceedings of the 2009 BALEAP conference: English for specific academic purposes*. Edited by S.Etherington. Reading: Garnet Education,13-22.
- [23] Jordan, R.R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers* (Cambridge Language Teaching Library).Cambridge: CUP.
- [24] Kachru, B. B. (1996). World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy. *Journal of Aesthetic Education. pecial Issue: Distinguished Humanities Lectures II (Summer, 1996)*. 30 (2), 135-155.
- [25] Kagan, V. (2016) *The Role of Russian Educational Policy and International scientific and educational co-operation in the development of innovation and the formation of "Knowledge Triangle": A speech at the OECD Headquarters High Level Event on the Knowledge Triangle*. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.oecd.org/sti/Kaganov\\_speech\\_Triangle.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/sti/Kaganov_speech_Triangle.pdf)
- [26] Kemp, J. (2017). EAP in a rapidly changing landscape: Issues, challenges and solutions: Proceedings of the 2015 BALEAP Conference. Reading: Garnet Education.
- [27] Leontiev, A.A. (1999) *Communication psychology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Moscow. Smysl. (In Russian)
- [28] Leontiev, A.N. (1975). Activity. Consciousness. Personality. Moscow: Politizdat. (In Russian)
- [29] Okamoto, K. (2015). Academic Culture: An Alternative Conceptual and Analytical Framework for Discussions on International Collaboration in Social Sciences. *Journal of Glocal Studies*. (2), 49-91
- [30] Panfilova, A. P. (2013). *Communication psychology: Students book for vocational education*. Moscow: Publishing Centre "Academia". (In Russian)
- [31] Research profiles descriptors. EURAXESS Germany. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors>
- [32] Safonova, V.(1996) *Teaching Languages of International Communication in the Context of Dialogue of Cultures and Civilisations*, Voronezh: Istoki,1996
- [33] Safonova V. V. (2015). Useful lessons of Pan-European International Integration and Professional Intercultural Communication during CE research cooperation. *Vestnik of Lomonosov Moscow State University. Series 19. Linguistics and Intercultural Communication*, (4), 9-22. (In Russian)
- [34] Safonova, V. V. (2017). Communicative Barriers in Cross-Cultural Academic Communication as a Linguodidactic Problem. *The Academic Mobility of Students: The quality of Programs, Social and Cultural Adaptation, the Impact on the Professional and Personal Development of the Student*. Moscow: Moscow City Teacher Training University. Kanzler. 149-156 (In Russian)
- [35] Sarmadi M.R., Nouri Z, Z., Zandi B., Lavasani M.G. (2017) Academic Culture and its Role in Knowledge management in Higher Education System. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*.12 (5), 1427-1434. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from [www.ijese.net/makale\\_indir/1907](http://www.ijese.net/makale_indir/1907)
- [36] Savolainen, R. (2015). Cognitive barriers to information seeking: A conceptual analysis. *Journal of Information Science*,41(5), 613-623.
- [37] Sternin I.A. (ed.). (2009). Communicative behavior. Issue. 32. Academic communication. Collective monograph. Voronezh: "Istoki". (In Russian)
- [38] The CEFR/CV (2018). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching Assessment Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Programme, Education Policy Division, Education Department, Council of Europe.
- [39] *The European. Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017)*. Berlin: ALLEA - All European Academies. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics\\_code-of-conduct\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf)
- [40] The Three Os: Open Innovation = A New Vision for Europe. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from <https://ec.europa.eu/research/openinnovation/index.cfm>
- [41] Towards a European Framework for Research Careers. (2011) Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from [https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy\\_library/towards\\_a\\_european\\_framework\\_for\\_research\\_careers\\_final.pdf](https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf)
- [42] Thorp, D. 1991 Confused Encounters: Differing Expectations in the EAP classroom. *ELT Journal*. 45(2), 108-118.
- [43] Vygotsky, L.S. (1934). *Thinking and Speech. Psychological Researches*. Moscow, Leningrad. (In Russian).
- [44] Vygotsky, L.S. (1991). *Pedagogical Psychology*. Moscow: Pedagogy. (In Russian)
- [45] Whong, M. (2009). *Proceedings of the 2007 BALEAP conference: EAP in a globalizing world: English as an academic lingua franca*. Reading: Garnet.