Investigation into the Professional Culture of a Foreign Language Teacher in a Multicultural Classroom from Faculty and International Students' Perspectives

Olga Stroganova * , **Svyatoslava Bozhik** , **Larisa Voronova** and **Natalia Antoshkova**

Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Graduate School of Foreign Languages, 194021 Polytechnicheskaya, 19, St. Petersburg, Russia; bozhik_sl@spbstu.ru (S.B.); voronova_ls@spbstu.ru (L.V.); antoshkova_na@spbstu.ru (N.A.)
* Correspondence: stroganova.olga88@gmail.com or stroganova_oa@spbstu.ru; Tel.: +7-9650685688

Abstract: Recent studies have shown that the number of international students, who are academically mobile, is growing. As a result, higher education institutions aim at competitiveness in the world market. Therefore, the core issue of the following work is a process of adaptation of international students to a new educational environment, especially to the process of English teaching and learning in new frameworks. Thus, the purpose of the study is to understand the role of a language teacher in the process of international students' foreign language learning by comparing faculty's and students' views on certain aspects of the educational process. For the following study, quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data using questionnaires with closed-ended and open-ended questions were applied, and the data analysis was carried out. The data obtained from the conducted survey reveals the importance of studying English for international students, their motivation and difficulties that they have to face. Moreover, the obtained data show the great complexity of the English syllabus and ways of its adaptation to the needs of international students. Furthermore, the results of the survey determine an important role of the professional culture of the second language teacher in the context of integrating students into the Russian academic environment.

Keywords: professional culture; international students; multicultural education; integration; integrative performance

1. Introduction

Our world has been changing rapidly. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights three main challenges that modern society will have to face in the coming decade: environmental, economic and social. Climate changes, economic crises, growth of the population, processes of migration and increasing social and cultural diversity are transforming countries and communities [1]. These modern trends are already affecting our individual lives and bring their influences in the life of society as a whole, making all its spheres respond to the current claims [2]. Education is not an exception. Scientists talk about such processes as globalization and internationalization in this field. It is becoming open, global and international [3].

According to OECD, in 2016, the number of international students getting their higher education worldwide was more than five million students compared with two million in 1999. Both students and higher education institutions have become academically mobile, and both of them aim at competitiveness in the world market [4]. Universities open departments, faculties and programs for international students. Young adults from all over the world would like to take part in them and study

outside their home countries [5]. For them, it is an opportunity to acquire new skills that may not be taught at home, a chance to get international educational experience, to become more competitive and, as a result, get closer to labour markets. Moreover, students come with a desire to be involved in a social and cultural life of a host country, to expand knowledge of other societies and improve language skills. In the meantime, universities also benefit from accepting international students economically, culturally and politically. For host countries, mobile students may be a significant source of income and may contribute to economic and innovation systems [6].

The Russian Higher Education System has a long history of interrelations with international students, beginning with the Soviet Union (USSR) till the present day. As an example, in 1990, the number of international students in the USSR reached 126.5 thousand people and allowed Soviet universities to formally take the third place in the world after the U.S. and French universities in the number of international students [7]. Currently, there is a definite growth in the number of international students coming to obtain degrees at Russian universities. In 2018, this number was 153,586 people [8]. With the change of the paradigm of economic and image components came the foreground replacing the political one from the range of factors determining the international students' education development in Russia [7]. Since September 2003, after Russia's accession to the Bologna Process, this tendency has become more evident and allowed Russian universities to be a part of the international educational community [9].

A good example is Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. It is a leading university of Russia with an approximate number of 7000 international students from more than 100 countries. Students from Europe, America, Asia and the Middle East take part in a wide range of educational programs from Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree programs to short-term and summer/winter schools. At the same time, the University provides diverse fields of study from engineering and economics to humanities. All these programs are both in Russian and in English [10]. Furthermore, according to the program type and its curriculum, international students study Russian or English as a foreign language, especially, if we mean humanitarian specialties such as foreign regions studies, linguistics, advertising, public relations etc. These departments are high in the number of international students. In this case, teachers of English deal with multicultural classrooms; they work with students from different countries and cultural representatives; such a situation raises some probing and sharp questions.

As pointed out above, internationalization is mostly considered as a positive factor that is important in the preparation for participation in a globalised and multicultural society; it raises the level of tolerance and understanding. However, this may be a desirable consideration. What do we really know about students' attitudes, feelings and readiness to be open to new cultures [11]? This is a core issue of concern.

On the one hand, teachers and students from different cultures altogether form a multicultural classroom context, where both of them encounter some dissonance in behaviours, toward which they have different attitudes and perceptions. If their feelings and views on the situation do not coincide, misunderstandings and conflicts happen, and even culture clashes might occur when one has expectations of a certain type of behaviour and gets something entirely different [12]. Furthermore, studying in Russia, students find themselves in the context where they have to use three languages: native, Russian, and English. As practice shows, the majority of international students are Asian, mostly Chinese coming from different provinces in China, and some students come from previous Soviet Republics such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kirgizstan, while some from the Middle East [10]. In the beginning of their first year of study, students who are non-native speakers of English and who have the English language in a curriculum according to their program type take a B1 Preliminary English Test to check the mastery of the basics of English. The test results of 2017 and 2018 showed that only 20% of students succeeded, and 80% of first year students had a Beginner or Elementary level of English proficiency. As for the Russian language, it is also not well spoken, especially by Asian students; besides, teachers do not have command of students' native languages.

This situation leads to a total impossibility to express themselves for both sides of the educational process, especially, in the beginning of study. On the other hand, new materials, ways of teaching and different pedagogical strategies pose another problem to international students. As students say, they suffer from misunderstanding, prejudices and, as a result, anxiety. One more issue concerning international students is motivation. There is a group of students who consider a host country not only for learning purposes, but as a chance to start working abroad. All these factors lead to such problems as truancy, poor participation in a classroom and not completing project works and home tasks.

Consequently, internationalization is a controversial question. It brings not only opportunities, but also obstacles. It is evident that internationalization of higher education creates teaching problems regarding language barriers, different teaching cultures and different learning styles [13]. This is a challenge both for students and for teachers, as pedagogical systems of host and home countries differ, universities have their own criteria of assessment, which are completely novel, and teachers use different approaches, strategies and methods.

In this context, the importance of multicultural education and competence is obvious [14]. Multiculturalism is always discussed together with diversity. Ignoring this issue may cause some problems such as lacking the ability to live together, alienation and identity confusion because of cultural discrepancies related to language, religion or race. The socio-multicultural perspective is crucial for social peace and tolerance in a society with different cultural groups because as a life experience, it may broaden horizons and offer new opportunities [15].

From this point of view, the goal of language education and, consequently, the role of a foreign language teacher are changing. Before, the main objective was to provide students with some knowledge and skills. Today, the significant goals of teaching foreign languages are to form a friendly and tolerant attitude to the values of other cultures, to motivate improving the foreign language level and to use the second/third foreign language as a means of acquiring information that allows expanding one's knowledge in other subject areas [16].

In this way, we talk about multiculturally-minded teachers [17] with a developed multicultural competence, who are competent to manage cultural diversity in the classroom and capable of teaching young people from different cultural backgrounds [18].

Nevertheless, we should not forget about language teacher professional identity [11] and self-image [19], as they need careful attention, as well. As personalities, teachers meet face-to-face with people who are different from them, and only such qualities as openness, friendliness and broad-mindedness can help to absorb everything new and to be respectful and mindful in a situation of linguistic and cultural diversity.

The findings pointed out above reveal growth in the various types of competences necessary for global communication and cooperation [20,21]. Hence, three main components such as professional, multicultural and personal competences form a professional culture of a modern language teacher, and they can prepare them for successful cooperation and avoid intercultural conflicts.

Such teachers help students in the process of their integration with the educational system and environment of the University. We have to mention that the question of integration has also been widely studied in recent papers. It is considered as one of the forms of acculturation [22], as intercultural engagement of domestic and international students [23], both as an objective process of interaction and mutual influence of the national educational systems and as the process of expanding institution activities beyond its educational system [24].

In this paper, we consider integration in a narrow context, not in its global and common meaning. By this term, we understand the process of adaptation to a new educational environment of the University. Particularly, adaptation to the process of English teaching and learning in new frameworks, to novel criteria and demands. This is the process of becoming a part of a new system without losing national identities, a process that helps international students to succeed in their study and make it as interesting and effective as possible.

All in all, integration and international students' issues in terms of internationalization of education are of current interest [25,26] (They are studied thoroughly from different angles. Literature analysis highlights some important issues. They are the following: international students are considered as an object for understanding the global landscape of higher education [27], the process of integration with university life [28], problems of cross-national communication and relations between international and domestic students [29–32], questions of creating a friendly, equal university atmosphere with acknowledgement of international students' diversity [33], international students' processes of adaptation [34,35], the role of mentors in these processes and in the process of fostering leadership development outcomes for international students [36,37], issues of academic and social support [38], psychological wellbeing of international students and their psychological, academic and university adjustment [39–43], international students' motivation [44,45] and the impact of education abroad and its importance for international students' future career [46].

However, an extensive literature review showed that previous studies have mostly concentrated on surveying either faculty or international students' views on the topic. For example, researchers discussed the successful integration process of international students and its fostering [23]; teachers' views on international students and their challenges [2], and vice versa, international students' academic, social and cultural needs [47,48]; and only very few of them have explored it from both perspectives. A good example is the research by Claudia P. Nieto, where the author investigated the relationship between cultural competence and the teaching and learning of international students [49]. Summing up, the literature analysis showed that there are no ready answers for such questions as: What is the role of integration in the forming of foreign language teacher's professional culture? What is a foreign language teacher's professional culture currently in the context of international and global education? What is the role of international students in its forming?

Thus, the purpose of our study is to understand the place and role of a language teacher in the process of international students' integration with foreign language learning, to find out the difficulties teachers face while working in a multicultural classroom and what difficulties international students face in the process of integration with the educational environment of the Russian university and the points of convergence and divergence in faculty's and students' perceptions of learning a foreign language at a Russian university.

These difficulties will be defined with the help of questionnaires of both students and teachers.

The study will explore five main issues: (1) the motivation of international students in studying English; (2) English syllabus; (3) effective ways of teaching English in class; (4) the importance of the cultural aspect in teaching international students; (5) possible ways to improve international students' academic performance in English classes. The points of convergence and divergence of these issues will help to find the answer for the content of the language teacher's professional culture development, to define the problems the teacher of a foreign language should pay attention to while working with international students and, subsequently, what changes are possible to recommend to the teachers of a foreign language, developing their pedagogical mastery in the context of an increasing number of international students coming to study in our country.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

An exploratory inductive approach was adopted in this study aimed at determining (1) challenges faculty face when teaching English as a foreign language in a multicultural classroom, (2) difficulties international students encounter in the process of learning a foreign language, (3) the points of convergence and divergence in faculty and students' perceptions of learning a foreign language at university and (4) essential elements in the professional culture of a foreign language teacher in the context of integrating international students into the Russian academic environment. The questionnaire, we believe, is the most appropriate instrument for the present study, which will ensure insights into the

problem, maximize the use of respondents' time and facilitate the data analysis. Researchers applied mixed quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data using questionnaires with closed-ended and open-ended questions. The study involved the quantitative and qualitative data analysis followed by the descriptive statistical analysis and the correlation analysis of quantitative and quantified qualitative data, which provided the researchers with new insights and detailed results. Two stages of the data analysis were undertaken. Stage 1 was comprised of two parts. Firstly, the collected data from both surveys were tabulated and processed in MS Excel and entered into SPSS Version 23 (IBM Corp., 2016). The quantitative data analysis was carried out by applying the descriptive statistical method and calculating frequencies in participants' responses to closed-ended questions, ranking them according to frequency, critically analysing and interpreting them. Secondly, the qualitative data analysis of participants' responses to open-ended question and their comments was conducted by means of categorizing them, identifying common patterns and themes in the answers, grouping and coding them. The descriptive statistical method was used to quantify the frequencies and critically analyse them. The results of these analyses help answer Research Questions 1 and 2. Stage 2 involved the analysis of the results identified in Stage 1 using the correlation method and the comparative method with the aim of answering Research Questions 3 and 4.

2.2. Participants

The study took place at Peter the Great Saint Petersburg Polytechnic University, Russia. Two groups of people were recruited to collect data for this study. The survey involved 31 members of the faculty teaching English as a foreign language at the university and 63 international students enrolled in undergraduate programs. All respondents volunteered to take part in the survey; they were informed about the objective of the study and guaranteed anonymity.

The faculty members had been teaching at the university for a number of years, and their teaching experience ranged from 2–25 years. Among the participants, 2 (6.5%) faculty members were male, and the other 29 (93.5%) were female. All of them had the experience of teaching in a multicultural classroom. Some respondents taught academic groups containing mostly domestic students and several international students per semester, and some taught multinational academic groups comprised only of international students.

The group of international students participating in the survey involved 63 students studying for a Bachelor's degree at the Department of International Relations, Institute of Humanities. Of those surveyed, 39 (62%) were first-year students, and 24 students (38%) were in their second year of study. The participants came from different countries, of which Asian countries predominated. Among the first-year students aged 18–24, there were respondents from China (59%), Turkmenistan (28%), Uzbekistan (10%) and Kyrgyzstan (3%). The second-year students aged 19–27 represented China (88%), Jordan (4%), Equatorial Guinea (4%) and Tajikistan (4%).

2.3. Data Collection

To address the research questions stated above, a survey was conducted within which two questionnaires were developed: one for the faculty and the other for international students. The questionnaires consisted of mainly multiple-choice questions and 1 open-ended question; also, most multiple-choice questions included the multiple response option and contained the field "Comments" or "Other" so that the respondents could share their view or opinion on the matter in question and state their variant. The questionnaires included similar questions for the faculty and international students to explore the matters of interest from both perspectives. This would allow us to determine the points of convergence and divergence in faculty and students' perceptions of learning a foreign language at the university, challenges they face in the process of teaching/learning a foreign language and their reasons, as well as possible solutions to these problems that will facilitate the process of learning a foreign language at the university and make it more effective. The questionnaire for the faculty was composed in Russian and English; it contained 9 questions and involved 6 thematic

sections: respondent's experience of teaching in a multicultural classroom, English syllabus, effective ways of teaching English in class, challenges in teaching international students, the importance of the cultural aspect in teaching international students, possible ways to improve international student's academic performance in English classes. The questionnaire for international students was composed in three languages, that is Russian, English and Chinese, in an effort to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations and maximize the reliability of data obtained, since Russian and English are not their native languages and the majority of students come from China. The necessity to utilize the questionnaires in several languages was determined by the results of the B1 screen test carried out at the beginning of the academic year which showed that most international students had failed it and had the insufficient level of English proficiency. Therefore, this determined the necessity to use the questionnaires in several languages. Students from the former USSR countries, i.e., Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, were given the questionnaire in Russian as their Russian language proficiency was at an adequate level. Students from Jordan and Equatorial Guinea mastered English at a sufficient level and were offered the questionnaire in English. The Chinese students completed the questionnaire in Chinese. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions and involved 6 thematic sections: motivation for studying English, English syllabus, effective ways of teaching English in class, challenges and struggles in the process of learning English and their reasons, the importance of the cultural aspect in teaching international students, possible ways to improve international student's academic performance in English classes.

The survey was carried out in April 2019. An online survey was applied to collect data from the faculty using Google Forms, which is an effective and convenient tool for recruiting and processing data. A recruitment email was distributed to 32 faculty members; some of them were approached personally. Thirty one completed sets of responses were collected, which rendered the response rate of 97%. The obtained data were displayed in Google Sheets spreadsheet. Sixty three international students were approached and surveyed personally using printed questionnaires. Of those surveyed, all 63 completed questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire completion rate was 95%.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in 2 stages. Stage 1 focused on analysing quantitative and qualitative data in closed-ended and open-ended questions concerning two issues: (1) challenges faced by faculty when teaching English as a foreign language to international students; (2) challenges and struggles faced by international students when learning a foreign language. The researchers analysed sets of responses independently, i.e., one researcher analysed faculty's responses, and another one analysed international students' responses. Firstly, they coded and tabulated the collected quantitative data into the MS Excel files. Thereafter, the data were entered in SPSS, and the descriptive statistical analysis using frequencies and cross-tabulations was run to calculate the frequencies in participants' responses from closed-ended questions and present them in the form of numerical data to be critically analysed and objectively interpreted by comparing them to other findings within this research. Secondly, the researchers classified, grouped and coded the qualitative data from open-ended question and comments to closed-ended questions to identify common themes, patterns and relationships within responses in relation to codes. Then, the data were entered in SPSS, and the descriptive statistical method was applied using frequencies to quantify and rank them according to frequency and analyse and interpret the data critically. Afterwards, the researchers met, compared and discussed the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis obtained from faculty and international students' responses. These results helped the researchers identify the challenges the faculty and international students face in the process of teaching/learning English as a foreign language at university and answer Research Questions 1 and 2.

Stage 2 was comprised of the correlation analysis of the results acquired in Stage 1 conducting the chi-square test of independence and Fisher's exact test for each questionnaire item in SPSS to identify the points of convergence and divergence in the faculty and international students' perceptions of

learning a foreign language at the university. The statistically-significant difference in their perceptions was proven by Fisher's coefficient with the admissible error limit of $\alpha = 0.01$. Thereafter, the researchers applied the comparative method to analyse the obtained results from the faculty and international students' data, which allowed them to determine essential qualities in the professional culture of a foreign language teacher in the context of integrating international students into the Russian academic environment and the possible ways to improve international student's academic performance in English classes. The results of Stage 2 helped address Research Questions 3 and 4.

3. Results

3.1. The Motivation of International Students in Studying English

The given survey was conducted in the groups of students belonging to the International Relations Department of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University and studying the Russian Federation: its language, culture, history, economy and other aspects. At the same time, their curriculum included a considerable number of English classes: the course of English for General Purposes lasted for three terms, and the course of English for Specific Purposes lasted for two terms. Besides, the curriculum contained such subjects as political discourse in international relations (in the English language) (one term), conducting diplomatic negotiations in the English language (three terms), a practical course on abstracting foreign print media (one term), etc. Definitely, studying the Russian language is a priority for the examined groups of international students, which raises the question if they are motivated enough to study the second foreign language and what type of motivation prevails among the students in studying English, instrumental or integrative [50,51]. Determining the level of their motivation is vitally important to understand what role the teacher of the second foreign language should play in motivating students and what measures should be taken by teaching staff in order to integrate students in the learning environment effectively and arrange practical, useful and effective language classrooms [52].

The results of the survey revealed the importance of studying English for international students: about 90% of the respondents pointed that out. However, reasons that motivated students varied: the majority of students, about 73%, studied English for their future career; about 50% grounded their motivation on matching the requirements of the university curriculum. It is worth noting the interest of the students towards the English language: about 35% chose the variant "it is interesting for me". It is also important to mention that the interest did not decrease over the course of time: first-year and second-year students demonstrated approximately the same results. However, there were a number of students with low motivation: about 8% of respondents pointed out that if they had an opportunity, they would not study this subject, and 6% claimed that they studied English mainly because of their parents' will (Table 1).

Table 1. The level of students' motivation in studying English.

Questions	Answers	1st-year Students	2nd-year Students	Total
Is it important for you to study English?	It is important	33 (85%)	23 (96%)	56 (89%)
	It is not important	1 (2.5%)	0	1 (2%)
	If I had a chance, I wouldn't study it	4 (10%)	1 (4%)	5 (8%)
Why do you study English?	I have to match the requirements of the curriculum	17 (43%)	11 (46%)	28 (44%)
	It is important for my future career	25 (64%)	21 (87.5%)	46 (73%)
	It is interesting for me	14 (36%)	8 (33%)	22 (35%)
	My parents make me do it	3 (8%)	3 (12.5%)	6 (9.5%)

The abovementioned data showed the importance of studying English for international students. The greatest number of students was motivated by future career, which can be characterized as both instrumental and integrative motivation: getting better working opportunities in the case of future specialists in the sphere of international relations was directly connected with the ability to communicate and integrate in any environment, no matter if they worked in Russia or in another country where English is spoken. A considerable number of students chose a purely instrumental and extrinsic motivation: fulfilling the requirements of curriculum and their parents' will. A significant percentage was motivated intrinsically, claiming to have interest in studying English. It is necessary to mention that while answering the above given question, students could choose more than one variant of the answer: in some cases, students chose two or three factors motivating them.

In general, the study revealed that the examined international students were more instrumentally motivated, which, on the one hand, is good, due to the high rate of motivation and their orientation towards getting better career prospects. On the other hand, the prevailing of such a type of motivation could have possible negative consequences for the educational process: as far as instrumentally-motivated students realized the importance of the language, they did not make as much effort and do not spend as much time on it as integratively [53] or intrinsically-motivated students usually do.

3.2. English Syllabus

According to the Russian Federal State Educational Standard, school graduates have to be able to use the English language at a threshold level (B1) [54]. There are certain recommendations, but there are no strict requirements to the level of English of university entrants; nevertheless, the main aim of the university course was "the improvement of the initial level achieved at the previous stage of education" [55]. The English syllabus of the course of English for General Purposes of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University is orientated at B1 + B2 levels and is the same for both Russian and international students. Thus, the level of English of international entrants has to match the same requirements; however, in a great number of cases, the level of English preparation did not correspond to the established criteria and in general varied greatly from country to country. Consequently, international students face considerable difficulties trying to reach the necessary standards.

In such a context, the task of the English language teacher is to diagnose how great the complexity of the English syllabus is and what adaptations, if any, are necessary and possible to make to meet the needs of international students.

The results of the survey proved the complexity of the current English syllabus: more than half of the questioned students (65%) considered it to be complicated. The reasons why it seemed complex can be seen in the following comments: "I don't know much about English", "it is hard to study two languages", "very little time", "my English is not good enough" (Table A1). For the examined group of students, the greatest challenge definitely lied in combining the study of two foreign languages, not only different from their native language, but also different from one another. At the same time, for a considerable number of students (33%), the syllabus was not complicated or was only partly complicated.

The results of teachers' survey showed a different view of the problem: the majority of teachers (77%) considered the current English syllabus to be appropriate for international students (Table 2).

Table 2. The level of complexity of the English syllabus from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Question	Answers	Students	Teachers
Is the current English syllabus too difficult for international students?	Yes	41 (65%)	7 (23%)
	No	21 (33%)	24 (77%)

The Fisher exact test proved that the difference between teachers' and students' views was statistically significant. The overall ϕ-value was more than the critical ϕ-value (ϕ* = 4.13, α = 0.01). The data revealed that the majority of teachers tended to underestimate the complexity of the English syllabus for students, in our opinion mainly due to the assurance that international students have to match the standard requirements of the curriculum and perform approximately at the same level in the field of the English language as Russian students do. Nevertheless, such underestimation of the complexity of the syllabus can lead to the development of a lack of confidence in the abilities, which can consequently lead to a greater level of anxiety among international students [56]. Anxiety in its turn contributes to students' lower performance and therefore considerably less productive work for the lesson [57].

Another question concerning the English syllabus offered to the respondents was about the adaptations that were possible to make to the English syllabus to meet the needs of international students.

Table 3 shows that the majority of students chose tests (54%) and exam materials (60%) as the most challenging aspects of the syllabus. The problem with tests might be explained by students being unfamiliar with the structure of the tests and task formulation. Exam materials might seem too complicated for students due to their speaking nature. Nevertheless, the comments of some second-year students, e.g., "there are no problems" and "nothing must be adapted" (A1), might give evidence of the fact that in the course of time, as the student adapts to the requirements, the abovementioned problems become less acute.

Table 3. The aspects of the English syllabus in need of adaptation for the needs of foreign students from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Question	Answer	Students	Teachers
What aspect of the English syllabus is the most difficult for international students?	Classroom activities	12 (19%)	12 (32%)
	Home tasks	11 (17%)	5 (13%)
	Tests	34 (54%)	8 (21%)
	Exam materials	38 (60%)	6 (16%)
	Other	7 (11%)	7 (18%)

In contrast to students, teachers chose classroom activities as an aspect to be adapted, which means that they face certain difficulties with the performance and productivity of students in class. This result contradicts the teachers' view of the syllabus as absolutely appropriate for international students and supports the idea that underestimation of the complexity of the syllabus leads to an undesirable effect on students' performance.

Fisher's exact test revealed the statistically-important difference only between teachers' and students' views on the complexity of such aspects of the syllabus as tests and exam materials. In the case of tests, the critical ϕ-value ϕ* = 2.66, α = 0.01. In the case of exam materials, the overall ϕ-value was more than the critical ϕ-value (ϕ* = 3.95, α = 0.01).

3.2.1. The Most Challenging Types of Tasks for International Students.

The first part of this section of the survey was aimed at determining what types of tasks were the most difficult for students in their own opinion and from teachers' point of view.

The results of the survey showed that students considered listening (62%), speaking (49%) and writing (32%) to be the most difficult aspects for them (Table 4). The obtained result slightly differs from the previous study on international students [58], which claimed that the majority of Chinese students, studying in the U.S., struggle with speaking and writing aspects of English, and [2], which reported writing to be the most difficult aspect and listening the least difficult one. Among the reasons why these particular types of tasks seemed complicated, students named a high level of foreign language (48%), not enough knowledge to cope with the task (46%) and lack of interest in the task (11%) (A1).

The results support the data from Section 3.2 concerning the complexity of the syllabus: a low level of foreign language prevents students from fulfilling the given tasks successfully.

Table 4. The level of the difficulty of different types of tasks for foreign students from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Question	Answer	Students	Teachers
What tasks are the most difficult for international students?	Tasks developing speaking skills	31 (49%)	20 (31%)
	Tasks developing Writing skills	20 (32%)	12 (19%)
	Tasks developing Reading skills	12 (19%)	7 (11%)
	Tasks developing Listening skills	39 (62%)	12 (19%)
	Presentation (project work)	8 (13%)	6 (9%)
	Other	0	7 (11%)

The teachers' point of view coincided with students', but with a slight difference: they chose speaking tasks as the most difficult ones (31%) and writing (19%) and listening (19%) as less difficult. Among the teachers' own answers were also grammar tasks, translating tasks, and home reading (A2).

Fisher's exact test revealed that the differences in views among students and teachers on the complexity of tasks developing speaking skills (the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.42$, $\alpha = 0.01$)), tasks developing writing skills (the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.67$, $\alpha = 0.01$)), tasks developing reading skills (the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.40$, $\alpha = 0.01$)), tasks developing listening skills (the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 2.13$, $\alpha = 0.01$)) and project work (the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.83$, $\alpha = 0.01$)) were not statistically significant.

The fact that students name listening as the most difficult aspect shows that they can have problems not only with fulfilling classroom listening tasks, but also with understanding the teacher's instructions and the speech of classmates, which leads to incorrect understanding of the requirements and unproductive work. Speaking problems can be diagnosed by a teacher in a more simple way, while listening problems are less vivid.

3.2.2. Forms of Work.

Another problem was concerned with forms of work appropriate for the achieving high performance and productivity of international students. The numerical data are represented in Table 5.

Table 5. The forms of work that are the most effective for international students.

Question	Answer	Students	Teachers
Which forms of work are the most interesting and effective for international students?	Individual	20 (31.7%)	20 (24%)
	In pairs	14 (22%)	11 (13%)
	In groups	32 (51%)	12 (15%)
	Discussion	13 (21%)	6 (7%)
	Role play	14 (22%)	6 (7%)
	Project work	19 (30%)	9 (11%)
	Vocabulary and grammar drilling	11 (17.5%)	18 (22%)

This part of the survey showed the most contradictory trends: when it comes to working with international students, teachers tended to choose more traditional and somewhat old-fashioned forms of teaching, preferring individual work (asking every student separately) and vocabulary and grammar drilling exercises.

At the same time, students' answers demonstrated their interest in communication, not only with a teacher, but also with groupmates: the majority of students chose work in groups as a form of work they liked most of all. An important role for them was also played by individual interaction with teachers, and here, the views of the two examined parties converged. In contrast to teachers, who did not attribute great importance to such forms of work as role play, discussion and project work, a considerable number of students chose them as interesting and effective. These types of work, especially project work, when representatives of different cultures work side by side, can make them interact and cooperate and consequently build tolerant relations [59].

It is necessary to mention that only the difference between students' and teachers' views on the individual form of work and vocabulary and grammar drilling revealed statistically-significant differences (in the case of individual work, the overall ϕ-value was more than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 3.05$, $\alpha = 0.01$); in the case of vocabulary and grammar drilling exercises, the overall ϕ-value was more than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 3.97$, $\alpha = 0.01$). Differences in views of other forms of work proved to be insignificant statistically (work in pairs: the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.34$, $\alpha = 0.01$); work in groups: the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.11$, $\alpha = 0.01$); discussion: the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.15$, $\alpha = 0.01$); role play: the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.32$, $\alpha = 0.01$); project work: the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.11$, $\alpha = 0.01$)).

In general, the result shows that international students, despite some existing stereotypes [58] about their academic and integrative performance, are ready for communication with both teachers and their fellow students. The preference of such a type of work might be explained by the desire to reduce the level of anxiety. As for teachers, they might prefer individual interaction with students and more traditional forms of work due to difficulties in arranging group or pair work, etc., arising because of the lack of understanding of teachers' instructions.

3.2.3. Challenges in Teaching International Students

In the framework of the survey, students and teachers were questioned on the point of problems they face in the course of the educational process and possible reasons why they occur.

Table 6 shows that among the problems teachers faced in the course of working with international students, the most acute was "not understanding instructions the teacher gives", which is natural in the context of the previous findings about the difficulty of the syllabus and low level of English among students. Surprisingly, the students' survey showed that the majority of them had no problems with understanding the teachers' instructions: 48 students (76%) gave a positive answer to the question, and only 15 (24%) answered that they did not understand them (A1). Students themselves described their difficulties with understanding the following way: "sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't, but I try", "sometimes some confusion", "can't all know", "hard to understand", "a lot of words I don't understand", "the teacher explains well, but I don't understand at all", "I understand, but not everything". Judging by the abovementioned data, the level of English of the majority of international students allowed them to understand the instructions given by a teacher during the lesson. However, there were some students, who were a minority of the class, whose level was so low, that it prevented them from understanding basic instructions and brought confusion into the classroom environment.

Table 6. Difficulties English language teachers face while working with international students.

Question	Answer	Teachers
	Being late for classes	5 (9%)
	Truancy	16 (28%)
What difficulties do you have while teaching international students?	Not doing home task	8 (14%)
	Unwillingness to participate in a discussion/lesson	8 (14%)
	Not understanding teacher's instructions	21 (36%)

Another extremely important question for all teachers working with international students is how to integrate them into the lesson and discussion and how to make them participate. In order to do this, both students and teachers were asked why in their opinion international students could be unwilling to participate in a lesson.

Both teachers and students distinguished the two main problems preventing students from participating in the discussion/lesson: low level of English and lack of knowledge on the topic. Judging by the results, it is vivid that teachers tended to underestimate students' possible fear of public speaking and simple lack of interest as factors that potentially can prevent them from effective participation in the lesson (Table 7). In such a situation, teachers' duty was to prepare students for the discussion in a detailed way, familiarizing them with the topic and filling in the gaps in students' knowledge, thus reducing the level of tension and anxiety and eliminating at least one of the problems: lack of knowledge on the discussed topic.

Table 7. The reasons for unwillingness to participate in a lesson from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Questions	Answers	Students	Teachers
	The topic is not interesting	7 (11%)	1 (2%)
	There is not enough knowledge on the topic	23 (36.5%)	14 (31%)
Why do international students sometimes not participate in a discussion/lesson?	The level of language is not enough to express the opinion	37 (59%)	19 (42%)
	The discussed topic is a taboo one	5 (8%)	6 (13%)
	There is the fear of public speaking	14 (22%)	5 (11%)

Fisher's exact test showed that in general, teachers' and students' views on such a challenge in the educational process as international students' unwillingness to participate in a discussion/lesson did not reveal statistically-significant differences ("the topic is not interesting": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.45$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "there is not enough knowledge on the topic": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.80$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "the level of language is not enough to express the opinion on the topic": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.24$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "the discussed topic is a taboo one": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.55$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "there is a fear of public speaking": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.71$, $\alpha = 0.01$)).

3.3. The Importance of Cultural Aspect in Teaching International Students

Another extremely important aspect that has to be taken into account in the context of teaching international students is culture. Ignoring culture-based peculiarities such as "different habits/preferences, different background knowledge, different conceptions of friendship and different ways of interacting and coping with unfamiliar taboos can lead to not integrating both in social and academic environment" [60]. Definitely, it is almost impossible to be aware of the cultural specificity of

every student in a multicultural group, since such academic groups are made up of students from different countries, e.g., China, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Jordan, etc. It was decided to examine the attitude of both teachers and students toward the role of cultural peculiarities in the educational process. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. The importance of the cultural aspect in teaching international students from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Question	Answers	Students	Teachers
Should cultural peculiarities be taken into consideration in the process of study?	YES	39 (62%)	29 (94%)
	NO	21 (33%)	2 (6%)

The results of the survey showed that both teachers and students attributed considerable importance to the cultural aspect in the process of work. However, at the same time, a significant percentage of students did not see this factor as essential in a teacher's work. On the other hand, the vast majority of teachers considered taking culture into consideration to be an important thing. The information on cultural peculiarities that teachers consider to be useful while working with international students was the peculiarities of the behaviour of representatives of different cultures 23 (40%), knowledge about the country the students came from 17 (30%) and peculiarities of the perception of representatives of different cultures 17 (30%) (Table A2). Fisher's exact test also proved that the difference in views of teachers and students on the problem was statistically significant. The overall ϕ-value was more than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 3.40$, $\alpha = 0.01$).

The results showed that teachers realized the importance of cultural awareness in working with international students. An important task for teachers in such circumstances is to treat the students' cultural differences not as an obstacle on the way to effective work and cooperation, but as a unique opportunity to enrich students' personalities by encouraging them to get the experience of multicultural communication and cooperation [61].

3.4. Possible Ways to Improve International Students' Academic Performance in English Classes

According to the survey, one of the most vivid basic problems is that the level of English of international students did not correspond to the university English syllabus. In order to find a solution to this problem and some other ones, both teachers and students were offered several options of how to improve the situation.

Judging by Table 9, it is vivid that both teachers and students saw the possible ways of improving current problems similarly. Their views on the problem converged, which was supported by the results of Fisher's exact test, which revealed the absence of statistically-significant differences ("having individual talk with a teacher": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 0.84$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "participating in a speaking club": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.09$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "participating in different events dedicated to British culture": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.24$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "doing more home task": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 1.45$, $\alpha = 0.01$); "doing online distance learning course in English": the overall ϕ-value was less than the critical ϕ-value ($\phi^* = 2.09$, $\alpha = 0.01$)).

Table 9. Possible ways of improvement of the English learning process for international students from students' and teachers' perspectives.

Questions	Answers	Students	Teachers
What would you be ready to take part in to make the process of studying English better?	Having individual talk with a teacher	17 (27%)	11 (22%)
	Participating in a speaking club	38 (60%)	15 (29%)
	Participating in different events dedicated to British culture	39 (62%)	15 (29%)
	Doing more home task	7 (11%)	1 (2%)
	Making additional online distance learning course in English	7 (11%)	9 (18%)

They both stressed the importance of developing speaking and communication skills by means of organizing a speaking club and arranging events dedicated to British culture. Such arrangements for students could be a useful thing due to the fact that they would involve representatives of different cultures and make them communicate and work together, which will prevent them from communicating among themselves and will help them to interact more with domestic students and international students from other countries [62]. It is interesting to notice that students who actually previously marked speaking as a problematic sphere showed the desire to improve this situation. Nevertheless, they also revealed the need to interact with the teacher in a one-on-one format, participating in an individual talk.

Students were also given an open-ended question where they had to say what in their opinion was to be done to improve the process of studying English. In order to assess the answers properly, they were categorized and coded, and a descriptive statistical analysis of quantified qualitative data was conducted by means of frequencies. Table 10 shows that the majority of students stressed the importance of intensifying various language skills' development (speaking and communicating, listening, reading, writing). It was interesting to find out that many students mentioned the necessity to study more, having perceived the question as what they personally should do to improve the situation, which gave us an understanding of students' considerable self-criticism.

Table 10. Students' answers to the open-ended question on what should be done to make English classes better.

Students' answers	Frequency	Percent
Start studying from the very beginning	4	6.3
Study more	8	12.7
Extra classes	3	4.8
Intensifying of skills development	21	33.3
More activities	4	6.3
Everything is ok	2	3.2
A teacher should speak slower	2	3.2
Interacting with a teacher	3	4.8
Total	47	74.6

Among the other answers were: "communicate with others", "everyday learn 2-3 hours", "attend classes"; "study more", "revise more". Speaking about the classes, students mentioned the following: "more active and interesting", "learn a lot of words", "speak, read, listen more". Some students mentioned the necessity of additional classes and even classes for complete beginners "to start studying from the very beginning" (A1).

4. Discussion

The data obtained from the conducted survey provided us with certain ideas on what role the professional culture of the second foreign (English) language teacher plays in the context of integrating international students into the Russian academic environment.

First and foremost, it was vividly demonstrated by the study that teachers' and students' perceptions of several problematic points, such as the level of complexity of the English syllabus and the aspects of it to be adapted, the most interesting and effective forms of work, the importance of cultural peculiarities, etc., diverged significantly. This divergence proved that an important element of teachers' professional culture was being able to assess critically and in an unprejudiced way the needs and peculiarities of every academic group of both international and domestic students and each student in the group separately. Despite being an expert in the field and having great experience, the teacher has to possess a certain amount of self-criticism to be able to understand the needs of the international students, compare them with his/her own experience and build up the most productive form of work on the basis of the current context.

Another important aspect of the foreign language teacher's professional culture was developing the skill of determining the motivation of students in order to understand its nature and be able to use it properly while arranging effective academic integration of students. This skill is especially important in the case that was described in our study, when international students study English as a second foreign language and its acquisition is not directly connected with their future profession. The ability to differentiate between different types of motivation, the awareness of interrelation of its types and distinguishing the prevailing one in a student is vital. Judging by the data obtained during the survey, to achieve the desired results, teachers have to act on students using a combination of approaches, suitable to encourage students with different prevailing types of motivation, which supports the ideas in [52]. To foster instrumental motivation, the teacher has to emphasize the possible positive outcomes of studying a foreign language and also inform students about the requirements of the curriculum (those disciplines they will fail in case they do not study English); to encourage intrinsic and integrative motivation, the teacher has to introduce information orientated toward students' future profession, provide additional more challenging tasks for those students who are eager to master the English language, etc.

Language awareness, which implies critical assessment of international students' level of knowledge and correspondence of the syllabus and requirements to their abilities, is another important point in foreign language teacher's professional culture. Teachers ignoring the problem of the discrepancy of students' level of knowledge and the requirements can lead to a lack of involvement in the lesson, a lack of motivation and interest, a high rate of truancy, not fulfilling home and class tasks and, as a consequence, a lack of productivity, which altogether lead to the student's inability to be integrated into the academic environment in the field of studying English. The results of the survey showed that despite considering the level of current English syllabus adequate for international students, teachers realized the importance of its adaptation. The majority did not acknowledge the importance of adapting tests and assignments, which corresponds to the findings of [63]; they would rather adapt classroom activities. The results of the study showed that in general, teachers tended to underestimate the challenges that international students face, especially in comparison with domestic ones; their academic needs might often not be taken into consideration, so teaching seems to be arranged with an orientation towards domestic students or uniculturally, as was formulated in [59]. Such measures as conducting diagnostic works to understand the weak sides of students, spending more time on explaining the format of homework, tests, project work, practicing more with exam materials, etc., will possibly at least reduce the level of stress and anxiety among the students and facilitate more productive work.

In the context of the above given conclusion, tolerance and patience in the case of students' poor performance proved to be another important aspect of a foreign language teacher's professional culture helping to integrate students. Constant comparison of international students with domestic ones can

lead to discriminating against the former on the basis of poorer performance in the field of a foreign language. In such a context, the most helpful measure is to individualize the process of language learning, emphasizing the intellectual ability of every student and the uniqueness of each student's opinion and way of thinking, which according to [64], leads to successful development of students' communicative competence despite the initial level of a student's language proficiency.

The ability to detect the most problematic aspects of the English language studying process objectively plays a crucial role in integrating international students in academic and social environments. As the study showed, the teacher, working with international students, has to pay special attention to the development of such receptive skill as listening, the problems with which can be not so vivid, but can negatively affect the whole academic and integrative processes due to students' inability to understand both the educational material and the teacher's instructions.

Judging by the conducted study, the ability to assess critically those forms of work that the teacher uses and select those ones that might be challenging to implement, but are effective for students' academic and social performance, can play one of the key roles in the process of international students' integration. An instance of this is group work, which according to the conducted survey, was desirable for student respondents and much less appreciated by teacher respondents. Their willing to participate in group work proves their willingness to communicate not only with representatives of their culture, but also with others, which surprisingly opposes the idea expressed in [65], that due to low language proficiency, international students tend to communicate with their compatriots, forming an isolated group.

Although group work might seem complicated to arrange, it helps to achieve several objectives simultaneously: giving international students more time to think, providing them with a broader range of ideas and opinions, reducing the level of stress and anxiety since the student has support and is less afraid of making mistakes and failing the task, achieving self-organization of students, providing mutual help, making representatives of different cultures work together, thus giving them the opportunity to communicate in a real-life context and preventing them from communicating with representatives of their own country alone. Role play and discussion format, as well as project work are much more effective and desirable for international students than teachers tend to think. These findings support the results of previous surveys [13,62,66]. Besides, our findings can support and illustrate the ideas given in [67] that low-performing students are in need of teachers' assistance not only in the academic sphere, but also in the sphere of social integration, and they might perceive group work as a means of achieving the latter.

Another important quality that a foreign language teacher has to develop while working with international students is the ability to involve international students in a discussion and in a lesson in general. Both students and teachers consider lack of language proficiency to be the greatest obstacle on the way to involving international students in a discussion, which corresponds to [2]. While doing it, the teacher must not only provide students with necessary conditions to participate in a discussion by giving simple and univocal instructions and sharing with students the necessary knowledge to encourage them to speak on the topic, but also has to reveal a certain amount of empathy, realizing the difference in students' background knowledge, detecting their level of interest, anxiety and involvement. Every discussion has to be prefaced by great and detailed preparatory work; otherwise, students who have both a lack of English speaking skills and a lack of knowledge on the discussed topic will be excluded from the discussion and will develop additional anxiety due to the fact that they do not participate in the lesson and fear getting a bad mark.

An inherent aspect of the professional culture of a foreign language teacher is cultural awareness and the ability to put this awareness in practice. This idea does not imply the necessity of having detailed knowledge of all cultural peculiarities, but rather the awareness of differences in teaching practices that exist in other countries, differences in behaviour and taboos, based on religious views, etc. The majority of students and teachers recognize the importance of teacher's awareness of students' culture, but in our opinion, it is also important for a teacher to remember his/her own cultural identity, making

cultural awareness bilateral and mutual, which will result in the development of multiculturalism and tolerance in the classroom [68]. Cultural awareness is the basis for the development of all the above mentioned skills, abilities and qualities, and it definitely can be characterized as the cornerstone of the successful integration of students into the Russian academic environment.

One of the serious problems in the field of assessing students' performance and challenges is getting the objective data on the point [69]. The given study contributes to the understanding of the essential elements of foreign language teacher's professional culture in the context of integrating international students into the academic environment. Both teachers' and students' surveys provided the objective picture of convergence and divergence in their views on international students' academic and social performance. Thus, the presence of differences and divergences gives evidence of the importance of taking into consideration both perspectives, while giving recommendations on the development of the professional culture of the university foreign language teacher. The results obtained in the study can be interesting not only for researchers, but also for a wide range of foreign language teachers. The study was limited by the number of respondents; besides, the questions were generalized as much as possible to be suitable for both teachers and students.

The study compared faculty's and students' views on such aspects as the English syllabus, the most challenging types of tasks for international students, the most effective forms of work with international students, challenges in teaching international students/challenges in studying for international students, the importance of the cultural aspect in teaching international students and possible ways to improve international students' academic performance in English classes. Future studies could deal more with comparing teachers' and students' views, taking into consideration a greater number of participants. Besides, they could be aimed at a more detailed analysis of each above-given aspect of the study separately.

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Appendix A The Results of the Survey "Determining the Challenges Which International Students Face While Studying English Language in the Russian University: The Students' Perspective"

The survey took place from 8–19 April 2019.

The participants of the survey were represented by the first- and second-year international students, studying under the Bachelor program, at Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Institute of Humanities, International Relations department.

Sixty three students took part in the survey: 39 first-year students and 24 second-year students.

The questioned students were from different countries. First-year students were represented by the following countries: 11 students from Turkmenistan, 4 students from Uzbekistan, 1 student from Kyrgyzstan, 23 students from China. The age range of the first-year students was from 18–24 years.

Second year students were represented by the following countries: 1 student from Jordan, 1 student from Equatorial Guinea, 1 student from Tajikistan, 21 students from China. The age range of the second-year students was from 19–27 years.

Surveys were conducted anonymously and voluntarily.

Variants of students' answers are presented in their original form, unchanged.

Table A1. Questionnaire "Determining the challenges which international students face while studying the English language in the Russian university: the students' perspective".

Question	Answer	First-Year Students	Second-Year Students	Total
1) a) Is it important for you to study English?	-It is important	33 (85%)	23 (96%)	56 (89%)
	-It is not important	1 (2.5%)	0	1 (2%)
	-If I had a chance, I wouldn't study it	4 (10%)	1 (4%)	5 (8%)
1) b) Why do you study English?	-I need to match the requirements of the curriculum	17 (43%)	11 (46%)	28 (44%)
	-Studying English is important for my future career	25 (64%)	21 (87.5%)	46 (73%)
	-Studying English is interesting for me	14 (36%)	8 (33%)	22 (35%)
	-My parents make me study English	3 (8%)	3 (12.5%)	6 (9.5%)
2) Is the current university English language syllabus too difficult for you?	Yes	26 (67%)	15 (62.5%)	41 (65%)
	No	12 (31%)	9 (37.5%)	21 (33%)
	Comments (in Russian and English)	"50/50"; "I don't know much about English"; "It is hard to study two languages" (Трудно учить2 языка); "Little time" (Мало времени); "I haven't studied it before" (Раньше не изучал); "My English is bad" (Мойанглийский плохо); "Not difficult I studied in China"	"Partly difficult" (Частично сложно); "Complicated, but interesting" (Сложно, но интересно); "Difficult, because I haven't studied it for 6 years." (Сложно, так как6 лет не изучаланглийский).	-
3) Which aspects of the English language syllabus are too difficult for you?	classroom activities	8 (20.5%)	4 (17%)	12 (19%)
	home tasks	9 (23%)	2 (8%)	11 (17%)
	tests	19 (49%)	15 (62.5%)	34 (54%)
	exam materials	26 (67%)	12 (50%)	38 (60%)
	Other	"There are no difficulties" (Трудностей нет); "Don't understand words"; "Unclear test range"; "Nothing is difficult if you studied well" (Если хорошо училась, все нетрудно)	"Everything is OK" (Все нормально); "My English is bad" (У меня плохойанглийский)	-
4) a) What tasks are the most difficult for you?	speaking	18 (46%)	13 (54%)	31 (49%)
	writing	13 (33%)	7 (29%)	20 (32%)
	reading	8 (20.5%)	4 (17%)	12 (19%)
	listening	27 (69%)	12 (50%)	39 (62%)
	presentation (project work)	7 (18%)	1 (4%)	8 (13%)
	Other	0	0	0

Table A1. *Cont.*

Question	Answer	First-Year Students	Second-Year Students	Total
4) b) Why are the chosen tasks difficult for you?	-the level of the English language is too high—I don't understand anything	21 (54%)	9 (37.5%)	30 (48%)
	-I don't have enough knowledge on the topic	17 (44%)	12 (50%)	29 (46%)
	It is not interesting for me to do this task	3 (8%)	4 (17%)	7 (11%)
	Other	"Vocabulary, grammar, I don't understand"	0	0
5) What forms of work are the most interesting and effective for you?	individual (when the teacher asks each student)	13 (33.5%)	7 (29.5%)	20 (31.5%)
	in pairs	9 (23%)	5 (21%)	14 (22%)
	in groups	21 (54%)	11 (46%)	32 (51%)
	discussion	7 (18%)	6 (25%)	13 (21%)
	role play	8 (20.5%)	6 (25%)	14 (22%)
	project work	8 (20.5%)	11 (46%)	19 (30%)
	vocabulary and grammar drilling	8 (20.5%)	3 (12.5%)	11 17.5%)
	Other	0	0	0
6) Do you usually understand the instructions, which your teacher gives you?	Yes	29 (74%)	19 (79%)	48 (76%)
	No	10 (26%)	5 (21%)	15 (24%)
	Comments	"Sometimes yes, sometimes no, but I try" (Иногда да, иногда нет, но стараюсь); "Sometimes some confusion"; "Can't all know"; "Hard to understand" (Сложно понять); "A lot of words I don't understand"	"The teacher explains well, but I understand nothing" (Преподаватель хорошо объясняет, но я не понимаю вообще); "I understand, but not everything" (Не все).	-
7) Why do you sometimes not participate in a lesson/discussion?	the topic is not interesting for you	3 (8%)	4 (17%)	7 (11%)
	you don't have enough knowledge on the topic	12 (31%)	11 (46%)	23 (36.5%)
	your level of English is not enough to express your opinion on the topic	25 (64%)	12 (50%)	37 (59%)
	the topic is a taboo one (politics, religion etc.)	3 (8%)	2 (8%)	5 (8%)
	you are afraid of public speaking	11 (28%)	3 (12.5%)	14 (22%)
	Other	0	0	0
8) Would you like your English teacher to be aware of cultural peculiarities of the country you came from?	Yes	24 (61.5%)	15 (62.5%)	39 (62%)
	No	13 (33%)	8 (33%)	21 (33%)
	Comments	It doesn't matter; let the teacher know more about foreign students; we are happy to make our teachers of students		

Table A1. *Cont.*

Question	Answer	First-Year Students	Second-Year Students	Total
9) What should be done to make English classes better?	Other _____ (please, answer in English or in Russian)	"Attend classes" (Посещать занятия); "Study (Учиться)"; "Extra classes" (Дополнительные занятия); "Start studying from the very beginning" (Начать изучать с самого начала); "Learn a lot of words" (Учить много слов); "Speak more" (Больше говорить); "Revise" (Повторять); "Read a lot" (Много читать); "Listen" (Слушать); "Communicate with others"; "More active and interesting"; "Everyday learn 2-3 hours"	"More talk"; "More practice".	-
10) What would you be ready to take part in to make the process of studying English better?	participate in individual talk with a teacher	11 (28%)	6 (25%)	17 (27%)
	participate in a speaking club	23 (59%)	15 (62.5%)	38 (60%)
	participate in different events dedicated to British culture	21 (54%)	18 (75%)	39 (62%)
	doing more home task	4 (10%)	3 (12.5%)	7 (11%)
	doing online distance learning course in English	6 (15%)	1 (4%)	7 (11%)
	Other: _____	0	0	0

Appendix B The Results of the Survey "Determining the Challenges Which International Students Face While Studying English Language in the Russian University: The Teachers' Perspective"

The survey took place from 8–19 April 2019.

The participants of the survey were represented by the English language teachers, working in the Graduate School of Foreign Languages, Institute of Humanities, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University.

Thirty one English language teachers participated in the survey.

Every questioned English language teacher had the experience of working in multicultural academic groups or groups of foreign students.

The survey was conducted anonymously and voluntarily.

Table A2. Questionnaire "Determining the challenges which international students face while studying the English language in the Russian university: the teachers' perspective".

Question	Answer	Result (people, %)
(1) Do you often have to conduct classes in multicultural groups and in groups of international students?	Yes, often Periodically No, seldom	7 (23%) 13 (42%) 11 (35%)
(2) Is the current university English language syllabus too difficult for international students?	Yes (it is too difficult) No (in general it corresponds to the capabilities of students)	7 (23%) 24 (77%)
(3) (a) Should university English language syllabus be adapted for international students?	Yes No Comments:	21 (68%) 10 (32%) 0
(3) (b) If yes, then, which aspects of the university English language syllabus should be adapted?	classroom activities home tasks tests exam materials Teachers' own variants: -"Exclude the tasks with translation into the Russian language" («Исключить задания с переводом на русский(с одного ин. яза на другой))»—2 times. -"Choose another set of educational materials, more appropriate for students' level of language" («Выбрать другой УМК, соответствующий уровню студентов»)—2 times. -"Studying English from the Beginner level" («Преподавание языка с нулевого уровня»)—1 time. - "Grammar tasks"(«Задания по грамматике»)—1 time.	12 (32%) 5 (13%) 8 (21%) 6 (16%) 7 (18%)
(4) What tasks are the most difficult for international students?	Tasks developing speaking skills Tasks developing writing skills Tasks developing reading skills Tasks developing listening skills presentation (project work) Other: -"Grammar" (Грамматика)—3 times. - "Translating from English into Russian" (Перевод на русский язык)—3 times. - "Every case is unique" (Все очень индивидуально)—1 time. - "Home Reading" (Домашнее чтение)—1 time	20 (31%) 12 (19%) 7 (11%) 12 (19%) 6 (9%) 7 (11%)
(5) What are the most effective forms of working with international students?	individual (when the teacher asks each student) in pairs in groups discussion role play project work vocabulary and grammar drilling Other	20 (24%) 11 (13%) 12 (15%) 6 (7%) 6 (7%) 9 (11%) 18 (22%) 0
(6) What kind of challenges do you most often face when working with international students?	Being late for classes truancy Not doing home task Unwillingness to participate in a discussion/lesson Not understanding teacher's instructions Comments: "International students love to clarify everything, ask again and again, but still do in their own way "(«Очень любят все уточнять, переспрашивать, но все равно делают по-своему») "Students understand neither English nor Russian"(«Они не понимают по-русски и по-английски»). "The need for clarification and low motivation" («Необходимость уточнения и низкая мотивация»); "Lack of understanding of instructions for performing assignments, lack of understanding of the speech of the teacher and students" («Непонимание инструкций по выполнению заданий, непонимание речи преподавателя и студентов»).	5 (9%) 16 (28%) 8 (14%) 8 (14%) 21 (36%) -
(7)(a) Have you ever encountered the problem of silence in a class in a multicultural group or in a group of international students?	Yes No	10 (32%) 21 (68%)
(b) If so, what do you think, what is the reason for it?	The topic of the discussion is not interesting for students Students do not have enough knowledge on the topic The level of language is not enough to express the opinion The discussed topic is a taboo one (politics, religion, personal issues, etc.) There is the fear of public speaking Other	1 (2%) 14 (31%) 19 (42%) 6 (13%) 5 (11%) 0

Table A2. *Cont.*

Question	Answer	Result (people, %)
(8)(a) Do you think that taking into account the cultural characteristics of foreign students plays an important role in the learning process?	Yes	29 (94%)
	No	2 (6%)
	Comments:	0
(b) If so, what knowledge would help you when working with international students?	Knowledge about the country the students came from	17 (30%)
	Knowledge of peculiarities of behaviour of representatives of different cultures	23 (40%)
	Knowledge of peculiarities of perception of representatives of different cultures	17 (30%)
	Other	0
(9) What measures should be taken to improve the process of studying English for international students?	Having individual talks with international students	11 (22%)
	Organizing a speaking club	15 (29%)
	Organizing different events dedicated to British culture	15 (29%)
	Giving students more home task	1 (2%)
	Making an additional online distance learning course in English	9 (18%)
	Other	0

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