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CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO MEDICAL LEARNERS

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola tibbiyot yo‘nalishidagi talabalarga xorijiy tillarni o‘qitishdagi asosiy muammolar va ularni bartaraf etish bo‘yicha mumkin bo‘lgan yechimlarni o‘rganadi. Maqolada tibbiyot sohasida ishlovchi mutaxassislar uchun til bilish kompetensiyasining ahamiyati ta’kidlanadi hamda mavjud to‘siqlarni yengishga yordam beruvchi metodik yondashuvlar muhokama qilinadi. Tadqiqotda “Tibbiy maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili” (EMP)ning o‘rni alohida yoritilib, tibbiyot fakultetlarida til o‘qitishni takomillashtirish bo‘yicha tavsiyalar beriladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: xorijiy til o‘qitish, tibbiyot yo‘nalishidagi talabalar, kasbiy ingliz tili, ESP, til ta’limi

Annotation. This paper explores the major challenges and possible solutions in teaching foreign languages to medical students. It highlights the importance of language proficiency for medical professionals and discusses the methodological approaches that can help overcome common barriers. The study emphasizes the role of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and suggests recommendations for enhancing language instruction in medical faculties.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, medical learners, professional English, ESP, language education

Аннотатция. В данной статье рассматриваются основные трудности и возможные решения в преподавании иностранных языков студентам медицинских вузов. Подчеркивается важность владения языком для медицинских специалистов, а также анализируются методические подходы, способствующие преодолению распространённых препятствий. Особое внимание уделяется роли английского языка для медицинских целей (EMP) и предлагаются рекомендации по совершенствованию языкового образования в медицинских факультетах.

Ключевые слова: преподавание иностранных языков, студенты-медики, профессиональный английский, ESP, языковое образование.

In the context of the increasing globalization of the healthcare system and the intensification of cross-border academic and clinical cooperation, **foreign language competence has become a fundamental component of medical education**. Modern healthcare professionals are frequently required to interact with international patients, participate in global research initiatives, attend medical conferences, and stay abreast of rapidly evolving international scientific literature. As such, the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language—particularly in English, which has become the lingua franca of medicine—is not merely an advantage, but a professional necessity.

This growing demand for linguistic competence necessitates a shift in pedagogical priorities within medical faculties. Traditional general English instruction is insufficient for

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equipping students with the functional communicative skills required in clinical and academic settings. Instead, medical learners need **specialized language instruction** that integrates core linguistic components with domain-specific terminology, discourse conventions, and culturally sensitive communication strategies relevant to the field of medicine. This includes the ability to take patient histories, explain diagnoses and treatments, collaborate with colleagues in multicultural environments, and comprehend complex medical texts.

Teaching foreign languages in medical contexts involves integrating linguistic and professional components. English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and particularly English for Medical Purposes (EMP), focuses on learners' academic and professional needs. Approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are often applied to improve both fluency and content knowledge. Developing communicative competence and mastering specialized terminology are crucial for effective doctor–patient interaction and academic success in medicine.

Teaching foreign languages to medical students involves addressing a complex set of pedagogical, cognitive, and motivational challenges. The medical education environment is inherently demanding, characterized by a dense curriculum, high academic pressure, and limited instructional time. Within this context, the integration of language instruction—particularly when it is not the primary focus of the students' future profession—can encounter significant obstacles. The following sub-sections outline and examine the most critical challenges typically observed in the process of teaching foreign languages to learners in medical disciplines.

One of the most pressing issues is the lack of sufficient time allocated to language courses within the medical curriculum. Due to the vast volume of core medical subjects, foreign language instruction is often viewed as peripheral or supplementary. As a result, language teachers are frequently required to condense complex linguistic content into a limited number of contact hours, making it difficult to achieve meaningful progress. This limitation hinders the gradual development of communicative competence, particularly in productive skills such as speaking and writing, which require regular practice and feedback.

Medical discourse is characterized by the extensive use of highly specialized vocabulary drawn from fields such as anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, and diagnostics. Mastery of this terminology poses a significant cognitive burden on learners, particularly when it is introduced in a foreign language. Unlike general vocabulary, medical terms are often derived from Latin or Greek roots, unfamiliar to most students. Moreover, many terms have near-synonyms or context-dependent meanings, increasing the potential for confusion and miscommunication in clinical interactions.

Another common challenge is the relatively low level of intrinsic motivation among medical students regarding language acquisition. Many students view foreign language learning as secondary to their primary clinical training and may not immediately perceive its practical value. This perception can result in reduced engagement, passive learning attitudes, and lower overall academic performance in language classes. The lack of perceived relevance can be particularly acute when instructional content is not clearly aligned with the students' future professional needs.

In order to overcome the aforementioned challenges in teaching foreign languages to medical students, it is essential to adopt **innovative, context-driven, and professionally oriented pedagogical strategies**. These approaches must not only address linguistic development but also align with the academic and clinical demands of future healthcare professionals. This section outlines several effective solutions and methodologies grounded in

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current best practices in English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and foreign language education for specific purposes.

The use of specialized teaching resources tailored to the needs of medical learners plays a foundational role in the development of relevant language skills. EMP materials, such as textbooks, listening modules, and video case studies, are designed to reflect real-world medical scenarios and terminology. These resources help bridge the gap between general English instruction and domain-specific language use, enabling students to acquire professional vocabulary, master communicative functions such as giving instructions or explaining procedures, and improve reading comprehension of medical literature. The incorporation of authentic materials—such as clinical reports, patient information leaflets, and scientific articles—further enriches the learning process.

Active learning methodologies, including role-plays, problem-solving tasks, case-based discussions, and medical simulations, significantly enhance learner engagement and facilitate the development of functional communicative competence. Role-playing doctor–patient interactions, for instance, not only promotes fluency but also familiarizes students with discourse patterns and pragmatic conventions common in clinical settings. Simulated clinical environments help reduce learners' anxiety and create safe spaces for practicing language in context. Such methods align with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes meaningful use of language through real-life tasks.

Teaching foreign languages to medical learners presents unique challenges due to the complexity of the content and limited instructional time. However, through tailored materials, interdisciplinary cooperation, and innovative teaching strategies, these challenges can be overcome. A focus on professional relevance, communication skills, and learner-centered approaches will ensure effective language acquisition and contribute to the formation of competent, globally-minded healthcare professionals.

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