



ISSUES OF PROFESSIONAL NEEDS IN TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE SPEECH TO MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Annotation: Foreign language acquisition has become an integral component of the professional training of specialists across disciplines. Non-philological higher education institutions have incorporated specialized, professionally oriented foreign language courses into their curricula. There is a need for long-term, high-level instruction in professionally oriented English for medical students. The implementation of innovative forms and methods in foreign language instruction within medical universities will facilitate language acquisition as well as equip students for successful professional careers in international contexts.

Key words: professional challenges, professionally oriented foreign language courses, experience exchange, academic and professional contexts, communicative approach, communicative skills, the ability to respond appropriately, demands of the labor market.

The large-scale reforms and updates currently being implemented within the framework of modernization and optimization of higher education in Uzbekistan are yielding positive outcomes. Numerous tasks have been assigned to the pedagogical community in the field of medical education, one of the primary being the training of highly qualified specialists capable of addressing a wide range of professional challenges under diverse conditions and in various contexts.

In today's society, foreign language acquisition has become an integral component of the professional training of specialists across disciplines. The quality of their language preparation significantly influences their ability to successfully address professional tasks and to expand cooperation with international partners. In line with this, non-philological higher education institutions have incorporated specialized, professionally oriented foreign language courses into their curricula.

Therefore, universities must ensure that students achieve a certain level of foreign language proficiency, enabling them to continue language learning independently after graduation. A number of comprehensive measures and regulations are aimed at achieving these goals. In particular, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 4310, "On Measures for the Further Development of the System of Medical and Pharmaceutical Education and Science," dated May 6, 2019 [1], emphasized the expansion of international cooperation with leading foreign institutions in the fields of medicine and education. This is to be achieved through the organization of international conferences and seminars, the conduct of joint international scientific research, the invitation of foreign scholars and educators for master classes and experience exchange, as well as the implementation of academic exchange programs for medical students—initiatives that undoubtedly necessitate foreign language proficiency at an academic level.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 312, "On Measures for the Effective Organization of the Promotion of Foreign Language Learning" [2], dated May 19, 2021, facilitates the implementation of initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for the study and practical application of foreign languages in both academic and professional contexts. This implies that foreign languages have become an integral part of the

daily routine of contemporary medical students. In lecture halls, they attend presentations delivered by invited experts in their respective fields in the international language of science; they search for supplementary information across global internet resources; they independently prepare academic reports utilizing digital information tools; and they assist foreign students in adapting to new environments by engaging in academic and everyday communication. Furthermore, academically successful students enter the realm of scientific inquiry, publish abstracts, participate in international Olympiads, and progress through competitive selection processes for international academic exchange programs. In this context, there is a pressing need for long-term, high-level instruction in professionally oriented English for medical students. Such instruction is essential for fulfilling the future healthcare professional's needs in developing personal, professional, and scientific potential.

The undergraduate curriculum for medical specialists of all fields includes the discipline "Foreign Language in Medicine." Within the framework of this course, future physicians not only acquire knowledge of medical terminology, grammar, and general vocabulary, but also develop practical communication skills. These include the ability to ask relevant questions, express thoughts clearly and concisely, and participate in discussions and presentations. These competencies enable effective communication in English and other languages, which is particularly significant in today's globalized world. Proficiency in a foreign language in the field of medicine is not merely an advantage, but rather a prerequisite for the professional development and career advancement of a specialist. [3]

In contemporary language education, the focus has shifted from a linguistic paradigm to a communicative approach. The primary objective of teaching university students today is the development of communicative competence, which encompasses a set of speech behaviors oriented toward the ability to adapt to various communicative contexts. The main goal of language instruction from a communicative perspective is to cultivate oral and written language skills in diverse forms and modes of expression. The mechanisms for addressing communicative tasks define the content of the academic discipline, including the integration and interaction of both linguistic and speech components. The development of communicative skills is particularly crucial for healthcare professionals, as effective interpersonal communication significantly enhances the quality of medical care. Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of communication within healthcare settings. For instance, M. Stewart et al. [4] (2000) and S. Greenberg et al. [5] (2009) conducted meta-analyses demonstrating a direct correlation between physician-patient communication and patients' adherence to effective treatment regimens, owing to the establishment of trust-based relationships. Conversely, communication gaps and language barriers negatively affect doctor-patient relationships, fostering feelings of isolation and mistrust. L. Kadagidze states that "the inability to communicate effectively between patients and healthcare professionals due to language barriers threatens both the quality of medical care and patient safety" [6]. Similarly, Jonathan McFarland emphasizes that "strong communication skills are an integral component of medicine and other healthcare fields. Communication is important not only for the interaction between professional and patient, but also within the medical team" [7].

Training in communicative skills within English language classes contributes significantly to the success and effectiveness of future medical professionals. The aspect of professional needs in teaching communicative speech to students of medical disciplines has been addressed in the works of Y.A. Neprokina [7], who pays particular attention to medical discourse; in the dissertation of T.D. Bashkueva [8], which investigates the formation of professionally communicative competence among medical students; and in the research of Zh.I. Zherebtsova [9], who outlines methodological foundations for the development of communicative competence among international medical students within academic-professional contexts.

Z.K. Temirgazina and Zh.K. Temirgazina conclude that "the ultimate goal of professionally oriented language instruction is the acquisition of foundational communicative competence by future medical professionals" [10]. Aligning with the views of many researchers, they argue that

the purpose of communicative competence in medical education includes the following: the ability to integrate acquired knowledge and construct monologic discourse on professional topics, expressing thoughts and ideas in a coherent and logical manner; the capacity to respond appropriately to interlocutor speech behavior, establishing a communicative atmosphere and sustaining professional dialogue; adherence to norms of speech etiquette in professional interactions with colleagues and patients, and the ability to respond appropriately to a range of communicative situations; active participation in conversation, the ability to express one's position and substantiate one's viewpoints; the ability to adequately comprehend and respond to the interlocutor's arguments; the competence to conduct professional dialogues and formulate pertinent questions for resolving medical issues; mastery of communicative contexts in professional environments, enabling effective interactions with colleagues and patients using specialized medical terminology and discourse.

Today, higher education institutions in Uzbekistan are setting the objective of integrating new methodologies into updated language curricula aimed at developing the communicative abilities of future medical professionals in ways that closely reflect real-world professional contexts. The competency-based approach [11], [12] to this issue emphasizes not only the retention of information but also the development of problem-solving skills. Accordingly, technologies for fostering professional competence should be practice-oriented and contribute to students' ability to address professional challenges effectively. Foreign language competence can be viewed as the development of the ability to perform effectively within a specific domain of professional activity, involving the application of specialized knowledge, skills, cognitive strategies, and a sense of responsibility for one's actions—actions that are directed toward the organization and implementation of creative potential in the professional sphere. The process of communication [13], in its diverse forms, plays a key role in the realization of the functional properties of both professional and personal competence, particularly in integrating the development of creative abilities. Communicative skills encompass a specific set of verbal and non-verbal methods of constructive interaction essential for physicians in particular clinical and professional scenarios. Speech is only one of many modes of message transmission that have been employed in human society since ancient times.

The professional needs associated with teaching communicative speech to medical students have been extensively addressed by both domestic and international scholars, including S.Kh. Sagantaeva [14], T.V. Kolomiyets [15], G.A. Belenkova [16], M.K. Baitakova, A.K. Derbisalina [17], I.Z. Azizova, V.V. Akindinov, S.A. Batashev [18], O.O. Aivazyanyan [19], S.T. Saleh Ahmed, S.V. Pawar [20], and N.J. Jalolova [21].

We align ourselves with their perspectives regarding the theoretical and practical dimensions of teaching communication skills to healthcare professionals and medical students. In our view, the current context necessitates that the foreign language education system in medical universities be adapted to the real needs of students and the demands of the labor market. In this regard, we propose several directions that may contribute to the improvement of this system:

1. **Mandatory Integration of Language and Profession:** Language instruction must be explicitly aligned with specific areas of medical specialization. For example, courses should incorporate discipline-specific medical vocabulary, terminology, and real-life scenarios that students are likely to encounter in their future professional practice.

2. **Utilization of Modern Technologies:** The adoption of online platforms, mobile applications, and interactive tools can significantly enhance accessibility and engagement in the learning process. Virtual reality (VR) and artificial reality (AR) technologies can create immersive language environments—*immersion* referring to a perceptual mode that evokes a sense of presence within an artificially created environment.

3. **Project-Based Learning:** Students may engage in authentic projects that necessitate the use of a foreign language. Such projects could include collaboration with international organizations or participation in global competitions. In the medical education context, this most directly entails

the study of specialized medical subjects delivered in English (EMI – English as a Medium of Instruction).

4. Communicative Approach: Emphasis should be placed on developing communication skills rather than focusing exclusively on grammar and vocabulary. This may include role-plays, debates, and discussions on current issues within the academic setting. In order to effectively achieve instructional objectives, each instructor must apply relevant methodologies and pedagogical strategies.

5. Cross-Cultural Programs: Organizing academic exchanges and internships abroad enables students not only to improve their language proficiency but also to acquire cultural awareness—an essential competency for working in international environments. Agreements signed by Andijan State Medical Institute with leading universities in Germany, Slovakia, India, South Korea, the Russian Federation, and Belarus provide for academic exchanges involving undergraduate students, clinical residents, and graduate students.

6. Individualization and Personalization of Learning: Accounting for diverse learning styles, paces, and student interests allows the creation of a more effective educational environment—one in which students are empowered to realize their individual potential and personal learning objectives.

7. Feedback and Assessment: Regular evaluation of student progress through formative assessment methods—a continuous process of gathering information on student achievements to adjust instruction and guide learners toward educational goals—enables timely and effective adjustments in the learning process.

Thus, the implementation of innovative forms and methods in foreign language instruction within medical universities will not only facilitate language acquisition but also equip students for successful professional careers in international contexts.

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