

THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AMONG MEDICAL
STUDENTS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the level of professional English language acquisition among students studying in the field of medicine, the existing challenges, and potential solutions. It explores issues such as the complexity of mastering medical terminology, barriers to understanding scientific texts, and a lack of fluency in both spoken and written communication. The article also proposes solutions based on the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) model, including the application of modern teaching methods, interdisciplinary integration, and incorporating English into practical training sessions.

Keywords: professional English, ESP, medical terminology, interactive methods, integration, multimedia, practical training.

Introduction

In today's world, shaping globally competitive specialists has become one of the most pressing priorities, and in this process, mastering foreign languages—particularly English—is recognized as a decisive factor. In the 21st century, English serves not only as a means of international communication but also as a key source of knowledge for acquiring profession-specific expertise and practical experience in every field. Especially in medicine—a discipline that demands high precision and responsibility—profound knowledge of English not only enriches a doctor's theoretical understanding but also significantly enhances their practical skills and ability to conduct clinical activities effectively.

For the medical field, English is not merely a subject of foreign language study; it is a vital tool for professional communication. It provides direct access to modern diagnostic and treatment technologies, global healthcare challenges, international protocols, academic articles, clinical research, and textbooks. Nowadays, most advanced medical equipment, software, and guidelines are developed in English. Therefore, a lack of English proficiency may pose serious obstacles in the professional activities of medical workers.

These factors underscore the growing necessity of teaching medical English as a specialized subject, deeply integrating it into medical education programs, and aligning it closely with real professional practices. As linguist Sh.A. Khidirova emphasized, "In teaching professional foreign languages, it is crucial that the learner is able to perform communicative tasks within the framework of their specific profession" (Khidirova, 2021). This statement necessitates the harmonization of medical language instruction with modern teaching approaches.

On this basis, it can be stated that English in the medical field goes far beyond rote memorization of grammar rules. Rather, it must be adapted to professional needs and focused on communication in

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real-life clinical scenarios. In other words, medical students should learn English as a tool for mastering medical terminology, effectively communicating with patients, participating in international conferences and internships, and writing and reading scientific articles.

From this perspective, the **ESP (English for Specific Purposes)** approach plays a critical role in ensuring the effective teaching of medical English. This, in turn, strengthens the language competence of medical professionals and prepares them to operate in accordance with international standards.

Main Problems and Analysis

1. Difficulties in Memorizing Medical Terminology

Most terms used in medical English are derived from Greek and Latin roots, and they stand out due to their pronunciation, morphological structure, and semantic complexity. Especially for students who have just begun their studies, memorizing these terms, understanding them in context, and using them in communication becomes a serious challenge. As G.G. Amonova emphasizes:

"The abbreviations and complex terms found in professional English make it difficult for students to memorize and use them in speech" (Amonova, 2022).

This indicates that rote memorization is not sufficient for working with medical terms; instead, approaches that promote their active use in practice and real communication are required. One of the effective methods is analyzing the terms by their root components, explaining their segmented meanings, and reinforcing them through visual aids.

2. Barriers in Understanding Scientific Texts

The language of scientific medical texts is complex, and their style is academic and formal, with extensive use of complex grammatical structures, passive constructions, and nominalizations. This creates a barrier to full comprehension of texts even for students who theoretically know grammar. According to linguist M. Khoshimova:

"Knowing grammar is not enough to master texts in the medical field; subject-specific knowledge also plays an important role" (Khoshimova, 2020).

Therefore, teaching medical English should also include the specialized vocabulary of the discipline, its system of terms, and conceptual framework. Consequently, developing strategies such as contextual analysis of texts, breaking them into parts, and identifying main ideas and details becomes significantly important.

3. Limitations in Oral and Written Communication

For medical students, it is not only important to read and understand texts, but also to express their thoughts clearly in oral and written form, describe conditions, and communicate concisely and precisely with patients. A. Karimova states:

"Most students struggle to express their thoughts freely in English during communication with patients, describing cases, and giving recommendations" (Karimova, 2022).

This, in turn, necessitates the implementation of communicative methods—such as dialogues, role-

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME-5, ISSUE-6

plays, situational tasks, and training based on real-life scenarios. Students must practically learn how to ask questions, give recommendations, and form professional speech in actual clinical situations.

4. Shortage of Educational Materials and Methodological Support

Currently, many textbooks are based on theoretical approaches and lack practical orientation, interactivity, and alignment with modern teaching technologies. This leads to reduced motivation for independent learning and a loss of interest in lessons. M. Gapparov notes:

"Methodological guides on professional language are mostly theory-oriented and lack a sufficient system of practical exercises" (Gapparov, 2021). Hence, it is crucial to develop new-generation textbooks that actively incorporate multimedia materials, interactive tests, video lessons, and diagnostic simulations.

Proposed Solutions and Promising Approaches

1. Implementation of the ESP Model

The ESP (English for Specific Purposes) model is considered one of the most effective methods for teaching language adapted to professional activities, especially in fields like medicine. According to D. Eshquvvatova:

"The main goal of the ESP model is to prepare students to perform professional tasks in English" (Eshquvvatova, 2021). This model enhances teaching efficiency through assignments specific to medicine, dialogue texts based on clinical cases, and materials related to professional correspondence.

2. Interactive Methods and Communicative Approaches

Modern language teaching methodology has proven that interactive and communication-based teaching is effective. Z. Ubaydullaeva states:

"Bringing medical communication closer to real life is possible through role-playing and problem-based teaching methods" (Ubaydullaeva, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to integrate methods such as doctor-patient role play, clinical scenario-based activities, case studies, and problem-based learning (PBL) into the teaching process.

3. Use of Multimedia Technologies

The role of digital technologies in education is increasing day by day. Through mobile applications, video lessons, medical podcasts, interactive tests, and virtual laboratories, students have the opportunity to develop their language skills independently in a format that is both convenient and engaging for them. B. Bozorov explains this as follows: "The use of mobile applications, podcasts, and medical YouTube channels in English encourages learners to work independently" (Bozorov, 2022).

4. Interdisciplinary Integration

In the effective teaching of Medical English, collaboration between medical and foreign language instructors plays a crucial role. Integrated lessons — that is, sessions that combine professional

knowledge with language instruction — help students develop the ability to think and communicate in English in real clinical situations. T. Yunuskhoev emphasizes: “Integrated lessons conducted in cooperation between medical and foreign language teachers simultaneously enhance students’ language and professional skills” (Yunuskhoev, 2023).

5. Integrating English into Practical Classes

If a language is not practiced in real-life situations, language skills will not be reinforced. Therefore, conducting certain phases of medical laboratory sessions, practical work, and clinical training in English — as well as using instructions and descriptions in English — allows students to acquire the language in a natural environment. Sh. Mahmudova states: “Conducting some parts of laboratory sessions in English leads to the natural development of language skills” (Mahmudova, 2021).

Conclusion

Effectively addressing the problems encountered in learning Medical English requires reliance on modern approaches and methodological foundations. Throughout the study, the main challenges faced by medical students in learning a foreign language — such as terminological complexity, difficulties in understanding scientific texts, communicative limitations, and lack of methodological resources — were analyzed. Based on the opinions of experts, several promising solutions were proposed: the use of the ESP model, interactive approaches, multimedia technologies, interdisciplinary integration, and the active use of language in practical sessions.

It is especially important to emphasize that teaching Medical English should not separate language from professional content. Teaching a foreign language not only through grammar rules but also through context-specific situations, real-life scenarios, and professional communication greatly enhances effectiveness. Today, in the context of the global healthcare system, mastering Medical English has become a pressing need for international experience exchange, writing scientific articles, and participating in international projects.

In conclusion, mastering professional English in the field of medicine ensures that students not only succeed in their academic studies but also develop into competitive, qualified, and well-rounded professionals on the international stage. Therefore, it is essential to approach foreign language teaching in education with innovation, integration, and responsiveness to professional needs.

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THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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