

To Teach or Not to Teach English for Medical Students

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ABSTRACT

The policy of the reforming of the medical sphere of education in Uzbekistan has a huge impact on teaching of the foreign language as a discipline within the general humanitarian sciences. English language teaching is gradually beginning to fade into the background, which in the nearest future threatens to "drop out" from the register of disciplines of medical universities. Foreign language, in particular, English as a general education subject, is almost lowered to the last place. The weak methodological base of the discipline "Medical English", which has replaced "general English" in the direction of ESP in recent years, as well as the modernization of professional medical education in general, creates a number of problems in the process of English language teaching. One of the most relevant areas of higher medical education has become the process of teaching special subjects in English, which also raises a number of urgent issues to address. The possibilities of improving the mechanism of learning a foreign language and effective measures for organizing activities in this direction determines the superiority for the medical higher educational institutions. In this regard, the establishment of a special specific environment for teachers of English in modern non-linguistic universities on the basis of profile and professional orientation, taking into account modern methods of teaching a foreign language, is an important factor in achieving high results in this direction.

Keywords

ELT, students, medical, professional higher education, ESP, methodology, new thinking, foreign languages, modern standards, competitive personnel, qualifications, professional skills, pedagogy, competence, motivation.

Introduction

Professional foreign language communication, which identifies the formation of relevant personnel as competent mature specialists in any field, dictates its own conditions in the education of modern trends in English language teaching. According to contemporary investigations, various methods of the teaching of foreign language, in particular, English are offered [1]. The current stage of development of education and science in Uzbekistan requires more and more effective methods of the teaching of English within the chosen specialty. Modern medicine, like other areas of development, requires specific skills, both professional and linguistic. English is in demand and very famous, especially in terms of studying scientific specialized literature and sharing international experience. This is one of the most relevant areas, as a foreign language, in particular, English is one of the compulsory subjects in the course of higher education.

Medical higher education of the former Soviet period had a kind of "traditional school", which maybe would have been effective, but noticeable lag in settled monotonous methodological approaches, where more attention was paid to the general theoretical direction and communicative English are often sidelined. However, this also gave good results from the point of view of the principles of general education policy of that time, it was possible to achieve success in teaching foreign language communication in line with the communicative methodology [2]. A differentiated approach to the quality of education, the development of methods for activating the system-professional presentation of specialized material revealed such problems as the presence of a number of unnecessary humanitarian subjects, which, in fact, complicated the task for both students and

higher medical education in general, as well as caused general resentment of students. In this regard, the students, instead of paying more attention to practice and theory in the professional field, were forced to cram history and other general humanitarian subjects, such as economics, tax policy, religion, especially at the initial stage of training. The current policy of reforming higher medical education in the Republic of Uzbekistan, along with other countries of the former Soviet Union, does everything possible, based on the current situational opportunities. Along with other achievements of independence, a huge amount of work was carried out in the country to radically change the state education system, and as a separate area of this activity, a new modern system of teaching foreign languages, in particular English, was developed [3]. Teaching foreign languages at medical universities in Uzbekistan has set the task for methodologists to create integrative models of language teaching in the profession (ESP). There was a need to create an effective and scientifically based teaching methodology in non-linguistic higher education institutions based on the adoption of modern standards of education. Based on the methods of teaching foreign languages, it is replaced by the inductive approach, which, in contrast to the deductive approach, represents a different style of teaching where the new grammatical structures or rules are presented to the students in a real language context [4], thereby providing students with the opportunity to activate intellectual and mental foreign language activities. Interactive teaching methods are becoming more and more a priority in the field of English language teaching [5], and as a result, the methodology itself is enriched through the introduction of new methods. The perspectives of modernization of the system of continuous professional education, resulting in the effective use of the principles of

variability, mobility and adaptability in the educational system of Kazakhstan [6], or the improvement the activities of foreign language teachers within the framework of the standpoint of methodological thinking as a purposeful way of solving some methodological problems, as noted in the research of some authors from Kazan [7] – these examples indicate the inevitability of methodology improvement in accordance with the latest trends in the world educational policy in the field of ELT all over the post-Soviet space.

Literature Review

Thus, the legislative framework created in recent years in Uzbekistan has determined a complete revision of the curriculum in this direction. The adopted laws and regulations aimed at reforming higher education, especially medical, have determined the reorganization of the scientific and methodical activity in non-linguistic universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of exchange of experience with experts of various foreign universities.

It should be noted that along with major changes in the field of medical higher education in the country, the 7-year bachelor's degree in higher medical education was reformed, which did not meet modern requirements. Since the 2017/2018 academic year, the following terms of study were established: 6 years were given for professional education (therapeutic care), military medical education (medical work) and pediatrics, for medical and biological study 4 years were separated, as well as for medical and prophylaxis 5 years were taken. It was noted that the seven-year bachelor's degree in higher medical educational institutions did not meet modern demands, and it also required too much financing of such education [8].

The time has come to further improvement of this area, especially for the training programs, in terms of training medical personnel. When analyzing the study hours, it was found that 15 percent or even more of the topics in the curriculum were repeated. In addition, the large number of non-specialized subjects in the curricula and undergraduate and graduate programs also took up too much time and had a significant impact on the gaining of knowledge in the specialty. Therefore the state educational standards of the bachelor's degree were revised. In other words, it was decided to expand the block of professional sciences, and to reduce the block of socio-economic sciences to 7%, and increase the number of hours of preclinical and clinical sciences to 85%. In the previous state educational standards, the volume of study hours in the humanities and socio-economic sciences was 15-20%, in the main specialty - 40-50%. This reform was aimed at expanding the knowledge of future doctors in the field of the specialty, starting from the first stage of higher medical education. Undoubtedly, such drastic changes in the field of higher medical education primarily involved improving the quality of training of medical personnel. However, the reduction in the number of hours in the humanities generally affected the teaching of foreign languages. Further reform in the higher education system poses a number of tasks, the implementation of which directly depends on the mastery of foreign languages.

Thus, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 27, 2017 "On Measures for Further Increasing the Contribution of Industries and Industries to Increase the Quality of Higher Education Specialists" sets the task of cardinal improvement of the content of training of highly qualified competitive specialists in the higher education system of the country. As stated in the resolution, the organization of teaching in English language the specialties of disciplines in the higher educational institutions today is one of the main tasks, as well as targeted training of the teaching staff capable of teaching special subjects in English is required. The issue of improving the skills of managerial and pedagogical personnel in developed foreign countries is noted as one of the most urgent tasks, as well as the further improvement of personnel adaptation to the level of international standards, and their mastery of foreign languages. The decree also says about sending young teachers and doctoral students with work experience to leading foreign educational institutions, establishing special scholarships for them, increase their scientific and pedagogical potential by organizing an international exchange of experience of professors; "step-by-step organization of teaching specialization disciplines in English in at least 2 groups in all courses", organization of their training abroad, as well as the involvement of foreign specialists in training, establishing training on the basis of modern educational literature used today in higher educational institutions of developed countries; "due to the agreements on mutual cooperation, sponsorship and grants of international organizations for 2-3-month courses in developed countries, in particular South Korea, Japan and Germany, teachers of higher educational institutions who prepare promising scientific and pedagogical personnel, primarily personnel in engineering, technical and architectural areas of education, as well as on advanced training of fellows abroad by the Government of the Russian Federation".

General overview

In this regard, the issue of radical improvement of higher education according to the requirements of reforming and modernizing modern education, and full compliance of personnel with the requirements of the world labor market, is on the agenda. For this reason, the issue of knowledge of foreign languages by specialists in all spheres of economic, social and political development of the country is of particular relevance. Reducing the duration of training of medical students and revising the programs of medical universities by optimizing it at the expense of humanities, undoubtedly, implies the quality of medical graduates as highly qualified specialists. However, it turned out that it is not so easy to destroy completely the old stereotypes. It should be noted that further optimization of subjects in the specialty is not an easy task. Let's give at least one example: not all universities are fully equipped with all the necessary equipment, laboratories, there is also a need to create educational and methodological literature, etc., and there are many such examples, but this is a completely different topic for discussion and research. As for the

teaching of special subjects in English, I believe that this problem should be taken very seriously.

On the basis of a modern approach to higher medical education and in order to improve the language skills of students, relevant English groups are organized with the involvement of teachers in medical disciplines, where majority classes in the specialty are conducted in English. The issue of language skills of the teachers of special departments themselves was on the agenda, where all the data is taken into account: the presence of an international standard certificate (ILTS, TOEFL, etc.), internships abroad, diplomas and certificates of completion of English language courses, personnel training, as well as training and retraining of medical teachers on the basis of Foreign Languages Departments of medical universities. The organization of students for such special English groups was conducted under the guidance of the Deans Office, with the involvement of teachers of the English from Foreign Languages Department, and on the basis of high performance results in the English discipline and mandatory interview and examination with students.

It turned out that the educational system is not quite ready for such changes and innovations, which is revealed primarily in the lack of training of professional specialists, that is, teachers of special departments to teach the subject in English.

Therefore, the implementation of these goals and objectives requires not only the educational qualifications, but also a comprehensive approach to the level of all current participants in the educational process as a whole. A range of studies related to the development of a new approach to professional-methodical training of English teachers ask in medical schools, provides teachers, ready to work in the new paradigm of education, with a gradual increase in training specialists with the necessary level of foreign language skills tailored to their professional needs. This, in turn, is a flexible but mobile study of a foreign language, with the definition of the characteristics of different levels of professional competence and the development of theoretical and practical foundations for the formation of professional and methodological competence based on integration into medical science and education. The stages and models of training such a specialist require a special approach, taking into account the current needs of the medical field. The current teaching of foreign languages, according to scientific and theoretical research in this direction, has a specific fundamental basis. Using a variety of techniques, enriching the professional skills of the teacher and the learning process play a crucial role in stimulating the student: "Diversity in the classroom is important as a reason that students learn to value and use diversity to the greater good. Having a diverse group of students indicates that in recognizing that all of the people are unique in their own way. Teachers can do to create an environment where each student feels valued and respected» [9]. Thus, it can be noted that modern research focuses on a number of problems. In particular, some investigations interpret the teachings related to the post-methodic condition [10], which summarizes the most important aspects of foreign language teaching in terms of the development of language pedagogy in different

historical periods. Some teachings note such points as students' beliefs in the advantage of a kind of balance between formal-oriented and meaning-oriented activities, which is important for the formation of communicative competence in ESL methodology [11]. A longitudinal study which investigates changes in attitudes about ESL learning [12] asserts the need to eliminate any detrimental trainee beliefs before they start teaching.

Improving training courses for English language teachers and increasing the number of hours of English lessons [13] remains an urgent and promising topic, strengthening the importance of the English language in a global way. Also, the relationship between the participation and experience of native English teachers, the experience of teaching English in Asia, and the experience of transnational English teachers in government-funded, English-language teaching programs [14] calls for deeper approaches to teaching English.

Higher special education in our time implies the quality of graduates of any field with knowledge of a foreign language, especially English, which really increases the competitiveness of qualified personnel in the world labor market. The use of English in various professional fields, such as engineering [15], computer science [16] and many others, is primarily based on effective language learning, and this implies compulsory English for all specialties aimed at effective use of English in their future profession.

In connection with the accelerated reform of the medical sphere in the country, the development of foreign language competence of medical students is becoming more and more relevant. The need for continuous improvement of modern students' ability to work with English-language literature, the acquisition of skills of communication with foreign colleagues in the framework of professional activities requires appropriate skills and knowledge. With the accelerated development and rapid pace of computer skills, with the increasing ability of young people to effectively and quickly process English-language information, as well as the processes of globalization of the modern world as a whole – all this ensures the rapid development of active skills in terms of mastering foreign languages. Students are also motivated by the fact that the reform in the field of higher medical education contributes to paying more attention to specialized subjects, the educational process increases the emphasis on the specialty. Foreign language as a discipline is almost relegated to the last place along with other general humanitarian subjects. Teachers of Foreign Languages Departments, due to the prevailing psychological and pedagogical conditions, need a more organized and responsible approach on the part of students to their subject. More or less reassuring is the fact that the discipline of "General English" is being replaced by "Medical English", but this side also suffers from weak methodological support. Undoubtedly, a number of studies have been carried out in terms of learning English in the profession, where the problems of the lack of a new methodology of educational work and psychological and pedagogical attitudes for medical students are touched upon [17]. Various modern methods of forming the language literacy of students of non-linguistic universities based on the development of

innovative technologies [18], along with other studies, are becoming increasingly relevant in the direction of ESP.

Purpose and research questions

So, English language teachers are replaced by specialists who are armed with knowledge both in their specialty and in English, which, in turn, is a living example of a high-level competence. Moreover, the teacher of English language specialist becomes the second-rate person in medical university, which completely sidelines the Department of Foreign Languages in a medical university. In some cases, the subject of English is treated as an unnecessary subject. Students are often not interested in attending English classes, because special subjects are more necessary and more important for them. It is observed that among the four declared “listening”, “writing”, “speaking” and “reading” competences the advantage remains at last for the “speaking”...

All this raises a lot of questions. How serious are the consequences of the gradually forming opinion that English classes are the second-rate ones? In this case, what is the knowledge of a medical specialist who conducts classes in English? Do they meet all the methodological standards and how classes in special subjects are conducted in English? Often grammatical mistakes completely change the meaning of the sentence. Only a linguist can correct and interpret such moments to a student, while a medical teacher may not pay attention to it. Some Latin terms are used in English according to the rules of grammar or word formation from Latin. For example, the term “vertebra” has its unusual rule for changing into a plural form as “vertebrae”. Another example is with the term “coccus” in singular and “cocci” in plural, and the students make the mistake not only in this, but also in the pronunciation between English - /kɒkɪ/ and Latin - /kɒksai/. It is easy to make mistakes when pronouncing medical terms due to their Latin and Greek origin, and here only a linguist teacher can clearly explain how these plurals are formed and pronounced. The same thing happens when using a medical dictionary, because in learning of medical terminology the student will learn to decipher definitions based on commonly used word parts, however, some terms cannot be “translated” in this manner. Even those terms with definitions that seem obvious based on their word parts may have more than one meaning. For example, look at the term “lithotomy” – based on word parts, lithotomy means a surgical incision for the removal of a stone (the combining form LITH/O means stone and the suffix – OTOMY means a surgical incision). Lithotomy is also the name of an examination position in which the patient is lying on the back with the feet and legs raised and supported in stirrups. And only the teacher of English is able to explain, why such a potential mix-up happens and how to use a medical dictionary as an important medical terminology tool [19].

In contrast to the medical teacher, the language teacher will definitely pay attention to this, corrects the mistake, explains the difference and tries to develop mechanisms for distinguishing English and Latin terms in the student. This is the exact technique that a linguist has, or a so called true teacher of English... Undoubtedly, a clear monitoring of the

level and quality of knowledge of a specialist in any field is required when it comes to teaching a special subject in English. And certificate availability of language courses with a certain level of knowledge in English here may not quite reflect its quality of knowledge. Of course, to follow the principles of the current reform, it may be for the best, but it is still worth paying attention to the fact that the healthcare sector needs highly qualified personnel who meet the principles of the international standard, with perfect knowledge of both the profession and language skills.

Based on the above, there are clear issues on the agenda: What is the specifics of language education in medical universities? What kind of resources can be used to implement the requirements of the educational policy in medicine without compromising language education? Where is the line between the opportunities and the realities that provide each graduate of a medical university with high-quality professional training at the international level, with a good knowledge of the foreign language in specialty?

Methods

As noted above, professors and teachers of medical subjects regularly improve their knowledge and skills in a foreign language. This activity is carried out within the framework of fulfilling the goals and objectives specified in the relevant laws [20]. As indicated in the regulatory documents, the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) course by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) have been organized for teachers of all non-linguistic universities. This activity was carried out regularly in accordance with the “Program for the formation of knowledge, skills and abilities of professors and teachers of non-linguistic higher educational institutions” and other subsequent regulatory documents in Uzbekistan State World Languages University. There were organized training seminars for teachers of the Foreign Departments of non-linguistic universities of the Republic, at the end of the which they were awarded certificates of trainers in CLIL.

12 teachers of the Department of Foreign Languages of Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute (TashPMI), who received these certificates, were involved in the activities of courses for the teaching staff of Specialized Departments of the Institute. Some supplements and changes were introduced to English curriculum for CLIL by the author of the given article, and a new program and curriculum that is based on the specifics of the given higher medical education have been developed. Accordingly, since 2013-2014, the Department of Foreign Languages of TashPMI regularly conducts classes in English for the teaching staff of the Institute. The process of organization and training was carried out with the taking into account such characteristics as the level of English language proficiency, the direction of specialization, the qualification level and the professional needs of the trainees. The training continued on a regular basis, and eventually it was expected to achieve the knowledge and level of all professors and teachers of the levels from B2 to C1 of the CEFR system. The tasks of the study included the formation of communicative competency

on ordinary, scientific and professional themes in learning foreign languages as well as enhancement of self-study skills in pedagogical sphere.

Methodology

Three-module training was developed for the levels of English proficiency. Descriptive indicators for dividing total hours by training modules are indicated in the Table 1, where the number of hours for practical classes and self-study are distributed. Accordingly, the plan consists of 90 hours (Module 1), 120 hours (Module 2) and 144 hours (Module 3) of practical training and independent work (20, 30, 34), the goal of each module is an example of raising the knowledge, skills and qualifications of professors in foreign languages to the next level.

Table 1. Descriptive indicators for dividing total hours by training modules:

MODULE I	MODULE II	MODULE III
Total hours – 90	Total hours – 120	Total hours – 144
Among them:	Among them:	Among them:
Practical classes - 70	Practical classes - 90	Practical classes - 110
Self-study - 20	Self-study - 30	Self-study - 34

The purpose of the modules is to increase the level of language skills to the next level. At the beginning of each course, the trainees are identified by level and divided into relevant groups. At the end of each module, the learners of the course should pass the exam and transfer to the next module. The main aim of the course of enhancement qualification is development of skills and abilities speech activity. The basic tasks of the course consist of:

- 1) fixation of knowledge, skills and abilities in studying foreign language at the listeners of the course
- 2) reading and understanding of texts with specific themes
- 3) formation of skills and abilities in studying foreign language such as understanding, speaking, reading, writing and translating

4) self-study skills in studying foreign language. Form and contents on organization of self-study consists of work with portfolio, completing tests on recommendations of Internet web-sites, collection of scientific materials on specialty, self-reading, etc. Figure 1 shows the main points of the educational and methodological activities of the training, which covers the different sides of interactive teaching of the English language.

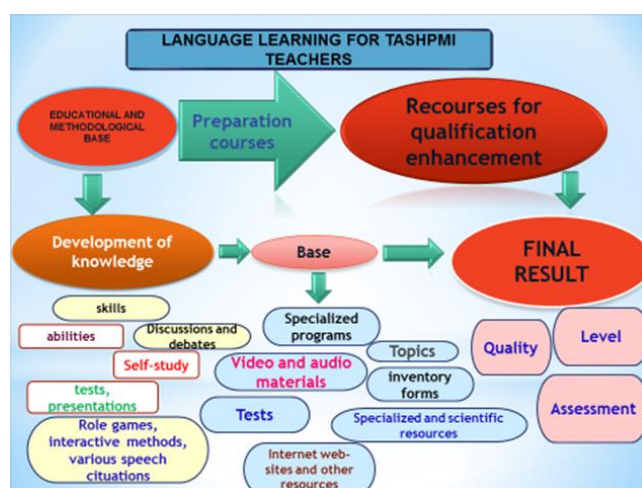


Figure 1. Educational and methodological activities of the training

Data Analysis

The schedule is drawn up in accordance with the curriculum. Each teacher conducts 2 hours of practical training 3 times a week. The training course covers a wide use of a textbooks, tutorials, guidebooks, lection books, video and audio materials, and electron recourses. Interactive methods of ELT, working with special tests, performing portfolio tasks, developing professional skills and abilities by presentation in English language, changing with experience and knowledge with colleagues, developing pedagogical speech in English are taught. Language learners explain their abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing with further progress to the next module.

For those who have reached a high level, monthly groups of independent fluency in a foreign language are organized (1 time per month), which provide for conversations, round tables, discussions, mini-conferences and other forms of communication in English for further improvement of the language and self-education. It should be noted here that the specifics of the university determine the teachers to choose the necessary linguistic directions, depending on their professional goals and objectives. Table 2 shows the level of knowledge of students who were rated "satisfactory", "good" and "excellent" according to the results of the training.

Table 2: Indicators of levels according to CEFR standards taking into account internal TashPMI assessment criteria:

level	language proficiency	assessment criteria:
A 2	Basic user	3 (satisfactory)
B 1 B2	Independent user	4 (good)
C1 C2	Proficient user	5 (excellent)

To assess the effectiveness of three-module training, as well as the assimilation of the English language by medical teachers, the analysis of three academic years of study was conducted.

Results

During 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years approximately 500 teachers of TashPMI employees of the Institute were trained in 3 Modules groups. The analysis of the conducted classes with the teaching staff of TashPMI for three academic years showed some dynamics of increasing language assimilation. Therefore, in November-January of the 2016-2017 academic year, 154 people from the recommended 160 professors and teachers have attended the classes. They have studied in 9 groups: in 4 groups on Module 1 and in 5 groups on Module 2. During October-December 2017-2018 academic year, 170 people studied in 5 groups of Module 1, 2 and 3. In January 2019, 150 people also studied in three Modules in 6 groups. The dynamics of the assessment for academic years is reproduced in Figure 2, which also reflects the results of the 3-level assessment criteria.

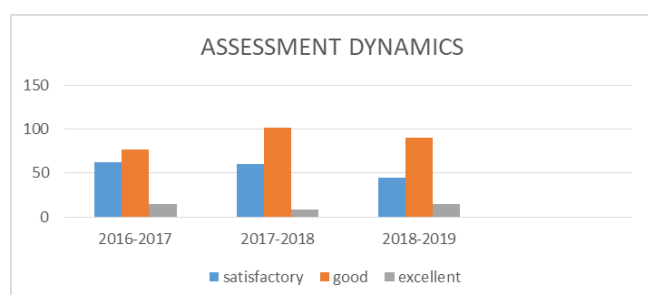


Figure 2. Dynamics of the assessment for three academic years

According to the monitoring of the assessment, the main difficulties in mastering English language were observed in the gaining of listening and speaking competencies, which is noted in Figure 2. It also has to be noted that by the age category, language assimilation among young teachers was higher than that of older ones.

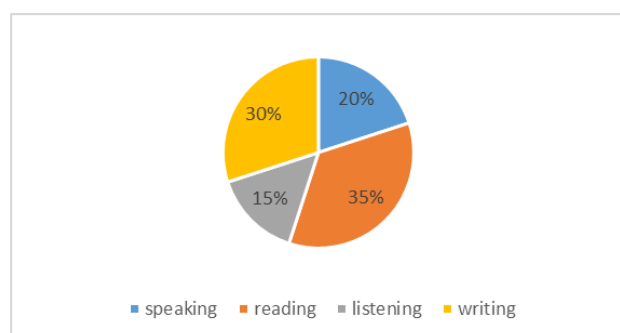


Figure 3. Monitoring the assimilation of language competencies.

Discussions

From the point of view of the medical sphere, the methods of teaching medical subjects in English and the sequence of the educational process are determined by achieving harmony with medical science and the exact system of knowledge. At the same time, this conciseness is not the only technique for perfect mastering. Analysis of "English in specialty" is a rather complex process, the degree of mastering of lexical units and grammar constructions also occupies a special place. The perfect sides to the knowledge of languages are a full supply of the definition of a clear style, richness of words, compliance with pedagogical and didactic requirements and laws. And the science methodology is interpreted from the point of view of the relationship to a particular field. Also, for the medical field, forms of teaching English language science as a certain unit of higher education are manifested due to the requirements of pedagogy and didactics.

Limitations and Future Studies

The question of linking scientific knowledge with educational and educational tasks in accordance with the requirements of teaching methods to the English language, the exact definition of the degree of sequence of teaching methods in it, expresses the unity of Science and education, determines the set of goals and tasks in the similarity and dependence of methodological equivalents. Thus will display the following set of tasks:

1. To understand the features of educational technology and to interpret them from the point of view of medical education.
2. Formation of the concept of "English for medicine" on the basis of the objectives, content and principles of higher education in this field.
3. Effective implementation of the stages of improvement of medical science, proceeding from the requirements of modern higher education policy.

At the same time, due to the peculiarities of medical sphere, it is desirable to pay special attention to the following aspects:

- * Organize the educational process in accordance with the requirements of the methodology of science, psycholinguistics and pedagogy.
- * Efficient use of methodological base on World linguistics, linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology in the creation and improvement of software.

The potential of the language capabilities of the teaching staff of medical universities is growing every day. In particular, it is important to note the fact that the percentage of English language acquisition among young staff is high, which to some extent determines the future prospects of medical universities. As for the activities of Foreign Language Departments and the process of teaching English in general, a clear organization of this process is necessary, taking into account the variability of internal and external conditions. These criteria is considered one of the main steps to ensure the implementation of current and strategic

plans. Here it is important to find an answer to the question of why it is necessary to master English language, and to find out whether achieving professional maturity and language acquisition is an important task at the current level.

Conclusion

The main essence of teaching future medical personnel English is an indicator of their professional orientation from improving their knowledge in accordance with modern requirements. It is desirable that the organization of activities in this direction should be carried out in the following order:

1. The basis of the regulatory framework. This refers to the initial content of the activity based on the requirements, standards and relevant programs.
2. Creating educational resources. It is based on the approved educational and methodological base, and also provides a set of complexes aimed at ensuring the quality of teaching, taking into account the characteristics of the higher educational institution.
3. The level of awareness of modern technologies. Mastering and regularly improving the world's best practices introducing new types of practical classes and independent activities.

Teaching English in higher medical schools requires the introduction of innovative methods based on the global educational process and international standards. The organization of the activity is a specific type of methodological management system that uses modern technologies and methods based on modern educational rules. According to this principle, the development of foreign languages is determined in certain areas of educational, methodological and scientific activities.

The creation and improvement of a highly professional background in the specialty is the same as ensuring the productive use of international principles and further professional development. Of particular importance is the formation of professional and communicative skills of the teacher, his training in the education system. The formation of professional and methodological competence occurs because of the creation of a multi-level system of scientific and methodological support, training in a specific professional and scientific environment, course specialization. The presence of contradictions between the current state of development of continuing teacher education and the analysis of trends is determined by the level of readiness to solve new professional tasks in accordance with the real needs of the system of continuing education and the qualification requirements in the system of teacher education.

Moreover, the question of "teaching English as a discipline" is still remains open...

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