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## MODERN CHALLENGES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF MEDICAL STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the specific features of foreign language professional training of future healthcare professionals in higher education institutions and substantiates the directions for its improvement in the context of contemporary educational reforms. The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing requirements for the level of foreign language communicative competence of medical specialists, the necessity of their participation in international professional and scientific cooperation, and the growing need to access and analyze international medical literature. The study identifies the specific characteristics of foreign language training for future healthcare professionals, which include the integration of general language instruction with the acquisition of professional terminology, the communicative orientation of the learning process, the integration of foreign language learning with specialized disciplines, and the modelling of authentic professional situations. Particular attention is paid to the necessity of developing readiness for foreign language professional communication within the systems «doctor–patient» and «doctor–doctor», as well as during participation in academic conferences and while working with scientific publications. The main challenges of foreign language professional training in medical higher education institutions are outlined, including the insufficient level of teaching and methodological support, limited classroom hours, heterogeneous levels of students' language proficiency, and insufficient motivation to learn a foreign language as a tool for professional development. The study substantiates the need to modernize the content and teaching methods through interdisciplinary integration, the use of interactive learning technologies, the case-study method, role-playing activities, information and communication technologies, and the individualization of the educational process. It is concluded that a systematic approach to the development of professional foreign language competence is an essential component of the training of competitive medical professionals.

**Key words:** foreign language communicative competence, foreign language professional training, Foreign Language for Specific Purposes, medical students, healthcare professionals.

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## СУЧАСНІ ВИКЛИКИ ІНШОМОВНОЇ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ МЕДИЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ В УМОВАХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ

**Анотація.** У статті здійснено аналіз особливостей іншомовної професійної підготовки майбутніх працівників медичної сфери у закладах вищої освіти та обґрунтовано напрями її вдосконалення в умовах сучасних освітніх реформ. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням вимог до рівня іншомовної комунікативної компетентності медичних фахівців, необхідністю їхньої участі в міжнародному професійному та науковому співробітництві, а також потребою опрацювання іноземних джерел медичної інформації. Визначено специфіку іншомовної підготовки майбутніх медичних працівників, яка полягає у поєднанні загальношкільної підготовки з опануванням професійної термінології, комунікативній спрямованості навчання, інтеграції іноземної мови з профільними дисциплінами та моделю-

ванні реальних професійних ситуацій. Акцентовано увагу на необхідності формування готовності до іншомовного професійного спілкування в системах «лікар – пацієнт», «лікар – лікар», під час участі в конференціях і роботі з науковими публікаціями. Окреслено основні проблеми іншомовної професійної підготовки у медичних закладах вищої освіти: недостатній рівень навчально-методичного забезпечення, обмежений обсяг аудиторного часу, нерівномірний рівень мовної підготовки студентів, недостатня мотивація до вивчення мови як інструмента професійного розвитку. Обґрунтовано доцільність модернізації змісту і методів навчання шляхом міждисциплінарної інтеграції, використання інтерактивних технологій, кейс-методу, рольових ігор, інформаційно-комунікаційних засобів та індивідуалізації освітнього процесу. Зроблено висновок про необхідність системного підходу до формування професійної іншомовної компетентності як важливої складової підготовки конкурентоспроможного медичного фахівця

**Ключові слова:** іншомовна комунікативна компетентність, іншомовна професійна підготовка, іноземна мова за професійним спрямуванням, здобувачі вищої медичної освіти, медичні працівники.

**Introduction.** In the context of ongoing socioeconomic reforms in contemporary society, there is an increasing need to train comprehensively developed and competent specialists who possess a high level of professional communication, demonstrate professionalism in business communication situations, and remain competitive in the labor market. In this regard, the necessity has emerged to substantially reconsider and improve approaches to the foreign language training of future medical professionals. The professionalization of foreign language education requires the preparation of specialists capable of using a foreign language as an effective instrument of professional activity and professional cognition.

**Analysis of research and publications.** Issues related to improving the effectiveness of foreign language training in higher education through its professional orientation have been addressed in the studies of H. Barabanova, H. Hryniuk, Ya. Diachkova, I. Zadorozhna, O. Kvasova, L. Konoplenko, L. Lychko, L. Morska, N. Skliarenko, O. Tarnopolskyi, O. Khomenko, V. Chernysh, etc. The theoretical aspects of the professional training of future medical professionals have been examined in the works of N. Avramenko, O. Andriichuk, I. Bekh, I. Bulakh, B. Hrushynskyi, O. Humeniuk, L. Dobrovska, L. Novakova, L. Rybalco, S. Chashko, A. Shmelova, and F. Shcherbakova. The scholarly works of K. Mitrofanova, H. Arkhipova, S. Herasymenko, M. Frantsev, and others focus on the formation of linguistic, foreign language, and communicative competences among students of higher medical education. At the same time, the issue of integrating foreign languages into professional training has been examined in the studies of L. Aleksieieva, D. Bulatov, P. Horliakov, N. Dmytriienko, Ya. Kuznetsov, and T. Poliakova.

Despite the substantial scholarly attention devoted to the training of medical students, the specific features of the foreign language professional training of future healthcare professionals and the formation of their readiness for professional interaction in a foreign language remain insufficiently explored.

**The aim of the article** is to analyze the specific features of foreign language professional training of future medical professionals in higher education institutions and to substantiate effective approaches and pedagogical conditions for its implementation in the contemporary educational environment.

**Statement of the Main Material.** Today, the healthcare sector and society as a whole experience an increasing demand for specialists who possess foreign language proficiency and are capable of conducting professionally oriented communication in a professional environment, mastering the latest achievements of international medicine, and participating in joint scientific and practical research with foreign colleagues. Medical professionals, practicing physicians, and educators of medical universities often encounter certain difficulties when processing professional information from foreign language sources and communicating with international partners in order to address medical issues [2]. This situation necessitates the development of new technologies, methods, and approaches aimed at professionally oriented foreign language training for students of higher medical education.

Medical higher education in Ukraine is currently being restructured through the introduction of new approaches to the organization of the educational process. Curricula, forms of practical classes, and criteria for knowledge assessment have undergone significant changes, while new pedagogical technologies and educational standards are being developed and implemented. Foreign language instruction within the university environment is an integral component of professional training and an essential prerequisite for the comprehensive formation of a specialist. The term *foreign language professional training* is used to denote the process of teaching a foreign language oriented toward mastering professional terminology, reading scientific literature in the field, and engaging in professional communication. The primary objective of foreign language instruction at the university level is to ensure that students of higher medi-

cal education are prepared to apply foreign language communicative competence in practice, i.e., to align linguistic means with specific communicative goals, situations, and conditions of interaction.

Modern training of future healthcare professionals should be oriented toward their mastery of a foreign language, which presupposes linguistically correct, stylistically appropriate, and contextually adequate use of speech as a means of both oral and written communication in all spheres of professional interaction. Foreign language proficiency becomes an important personal and professional characteristic of a medical specialist, reflecting the ability to engage effectively in professional communication. In this context, professionally oriented communicative training in a foreign language within medical higher education institutions becomes both effective and methodologically justified, as it promotes the development of students' ability to communicate in a foreign language within specific professional, business, and scientific contexts.

In the educational process of medical higher education institutions, certain stereotypes previously existed that oriented the content of professional education primarily toward core disciplinary subjects. Traditional approaches to professional education often underestimated the role of foreign language learning as a component of professional training and as a means of developing professional foreign language communicative competence. As a consequence, insufficient academic time was allocated to foreign language instruction, which became one of the reasons for the relatively low level of foreign language proficiency among many graduates of medical universities. However, under the new conditions of social development, approaches to education in general, and to language education in medical higher education institutions in particular, are gradually changing. A foreign language is increasingly regarded as a tool of intercultural communication. Therefore, there is a need to reconsider the role and content of foreign language education in the new educational context. A foreign language is not traditionally considered a core discipline in medical higher education institutions. However, when it is regarded as a means of developing an important professional quality, namely foreign language communicative competence, its status within the overall system of academic disciplines becomes significantly higher. Graduates of medical specialties should demonstrate readiness for foreign language communication in a professional intercultural environment, demonstrate the capacity to navigate the rapidly expanding flow of information, and critically analyze their professional activities within the context of medical practice in leading countries of the global community [1].

Foreign language learning is an integral component of the professional preparation of students in medical higher education institutions. Its main objectives are to develop practical skills in using a foreign language for professional communication, foster students' ability to work independently in foreign language learning, improve the quality of professional training through foreign language instruction, broaden students' general outlook and communication culture, and develop foreign language communicative competence.

The Educational and Professional Programme [4] for training specialists in higher medical education institutions requires future professionals not only to possess high-level qualifications in their chosen field but also to be capable of cooperating with foreign colleagues and communicating freely in both the state language and at least one foreign language [4]. Such competencies enhance their competitiveness in the international professional labor market. The development of professional foreign language competence in medical education institutions is therefore of particular importance, since medicine belongs to professional fields that require a high level of foreign language proficiency for effective professional communication. Contemporary methodological research recommends orienting the language learning process toward the development of speech skills and abilities and, consequently, toward the formation of communicative competence through active engagement in solving speech and cognitive tasks. Achieving this objective requires consideration of all components of foreign language professional training (Fig. 1).

The specificity of foreign language professional training for future healthcare professionals in higher education institutions lies in the development of foreign language communicative competence, which integrates general language knowledge with in-depth mastery of medical terminology. The training is aimed at developing professional communication skills, working with scientific literature, understanding documentation, and familiarizing students with international treatment standards.

The main characteristics of foreign language professional training for future medical practitioners include:

1) Communicative orientation: emphasis on oral and written professional communication (physician–patient, physician–physician).

2) Terminological richness: acquisition of a large number of Latin, Greek, and contemporary English medical terms.

3) Use of contextual tasks: modeling clinical situations, role-playing, and analyzing real medical case studies.

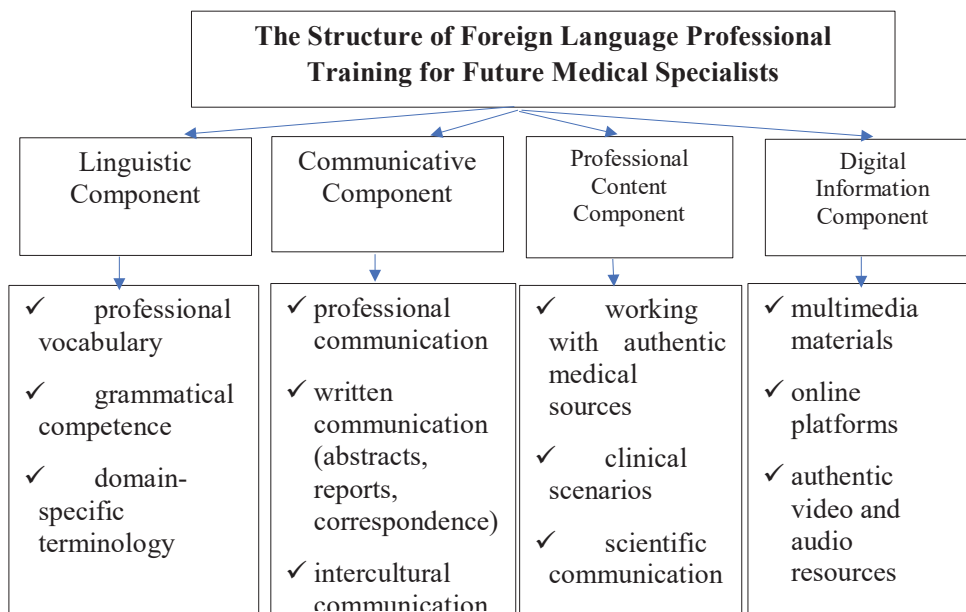


Fig. 1. The Structure of Foreign Language Professional Training for Future Medical Specialists

4) Integration of language and specialty: language learning occurs through professionally oriented texts and materials (e.g., anatomy, pharmacology) rather than in isolation.

5) Development of critical thinking: the ability to analyze international medical sources and scientific publications.

The main challenges in foreign language professional training for students in higher medical education include insufficiently developed programmes, methodological guidelines, and instructional manuals for learning professionally oriented foreign languages; a shortage of modern authentic video and audio learning materials; low motivation among medical students to master a foreign language as a key tool for accessing professional information; a student-centered approach that treats learners primarily as passive recipients of ready-made knowledge; and limited familiarity with terminology, foundational concepts of the specialty, and the specifics of translating professional literature, which can result in misunderstandings among participants in the educational process.

To address these challenges and meet the contemporary societal demand for specialists with professional foreign language proficiency at international standards, effective modernization of foreign language instruction in higher medical education is required, along with the identification of strategies to enhance foreign language training for specialists (Table 1).

Foreign language professional training for future healthcare professionals is also essential for successfully passing the integrated licensing examination «KROK», which assesses the compliance of specialist

training quality with higher education standards and is administered by the Testing Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (some of the examination questions are presented in English).

To improve foreign language professional training for future specialists in higher medical education institutions, it is necessary to introduce elective courses such as «*Foreign Medical Terminology*» into the educational process for students of all medical specialties. The implementation of such courses will help address existing gaps in students' foreign language proficiency and enhance the competence of medical students in professional English.

Foreign language education for future medical professionals in Ukraine is currently undergoing reform, taking into account the major achievements of European countries. In particular, medical higher education institutions are introducing elective courses aimed at learning foreign languages for professional purposes, while the requirements for the overall level of foreign language proficiency and the development of advanced communicative skills are also increasing. Mastery of professionally oriented English should ensure that specialists are capable of effective communication in professional, occupational, and administrative-legal contexts within relevant socio-communicative roles, which involves the use of Business Foreign Language and Foreign Language for Specific Purposes.

A professionally oriented approach requires the integration of the discipline «*Foreign Language for Specific Purposes*» with core professional subjects. It also places an important task on foreign language instructors, namely to teach future specialists, through interdisciplinary connections, to use a foreign lan-

**Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of Foreign Language Professional Training**

Area	Specific Actions	Expected Outcome
Interdisciplinary integration	Alignment of topics with core professional disciplines	Increased professional relevance
Interactive methods	Role-playing, case studies, discussions	Development of communicative skills
Information and computer technologies	Videos, digital platforms, online courses	Increased student motivation
Individualization	Level-based tasks	Improved learning outcomes
Practical orientation	Work with clinical scenarios	Readiness for professional communication

guage as a means of systematically expanding their professional knowledge as well as developing professional skills and competencies. The implementation of interdisciplinary integration involves the coordination, alignment, and enrichment of course content through scientific knowledge from different academic disciplines. This approach is reflected in integrated courses and curricula, facilitates the involvement of medical students in professional communication, and increases motivation to learn a foreign language. The involvement of specialists from relevant professional disciplines can further improve the quality of instruction and the effectiveness of student learning. As a result, joint educational and methodological resources may be developed, including multimedia manuals, dialogic practice guides, glossaries, audio-visual materials, laboratory tasks, and other instructional resources.

When organizing foreign language professional training, several key tasks must be addressed. These include defining clear learning objectives, fostering motivation among medical students, selecting and structuring instructional materials based on interdisciplinary integration, considering learners' psychological characteristics, identifying effective teaching approaches, and creating appropriate organizational and pedagogical conditions for implementing such training. In addition, the content and teaching methods of foreign language instruction should be aligned with the practical needs of students. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the selection and critical evaluation of instructional materials, taking into account the professional specificity of the discipline and the students' level of language proficiency. Within the framework of professionally oriented foreign language instruction, it is also important to consider students' individual characteristics, including their level of intellectual development, readiness to study a foreign language, ability to perform analytical and synthetic tasks, and capacity for independent learning.

Professionally oriented foreign language training is implemented through the modeling of future pro-

fessional activities. Accordingly, foreign language classes incorporate learning tasks that simulate professional situations and can be presented to students as elements of both their educational and professional practice. Such tasks enable future healthcare professionals to demonstrate their knowledge of linguistic structures and communicative patterns and to apply them effectively in professional contexts. A high level of foreign language competence in professional communication largely determines the effectiveness of healthcare professionals' activities. It also enables them to present ideas logically and persuasively at international conferences and symposia and to establish productive professional relationships with colleagues from other countries.

The foreign language learning environment for future healthcare professionals at the Department of Foreign Languages of I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University is organized as a three-level system. The first level focuses on mastering the fundamentals of Latin medical terminology. The second level aims to develop and refine basic foreign language communicative skills. The third level is devoted to the acquisition of the professional language of medicine. Teaching experience at the department indicates that the development of foreign language communicative competence requires the use of methods and educational technologies specifically designed to foster professional communication in a foreign language. Such approaches increase students' motivation to study «Foreign Language for Professional Purposes» as an important component of their professional training. Interactive teaching methods play a central role in this process. These methods are based on active interaction between instructors and students and emphasize direct interpersonal communication in a foreign language. In such interactions, students learn to adopt different communicative roles, anticipate the perspectives of their interlocutors, and participate effectively in communicative situations [3]. Professional communication during classes occurs through several interactive formats, including instructor–student, student–student, and group inter-

action. Teaching materials should therefore introduce students to authentic professional communication contexts. At the same time, they should support the development of grammatical competence across different learning formats, including reading texts, dialogues, communicative exercises, and creative tasks [3].

Motivation to learn foreign languages in medical education can be strengthened through professionally oriented role-playing activities. Such activities engage students in interactive classroom participation and create opportunities for informal yet purposeful communication. They also allow students to evaluate their communicative abilities in realistic professional situations. As a result, the proportion of foreign language communication within practical classes increases.

A learner-centered approach requires the implementation of individualized instruction. In practice, instructors select differentiated learning materials that correspond to students' levels of language proficiency. Simplified tasks may be offered to students with lower levels of language competence, while additional or more complex tasks may be provided for advanced learners. Audio and video materials followed by targeted assignments are also widely used. In addition, students may complete alternative tasks that are directly related to their professional training. These tasks may include preparing thematic presentations, participating in academic competitions, delivering presentations at student scientific conferences, or writing analytical reports. Such activities reinforce the principle of teaching a foreign language as a medium of professional communication and integrate language learning with professional knowledge.

During practical classes, instructors use didactic materials that incorporate the key elements of B2-level foreign language programmes. These materials are designed for both in-class and independent learning and include sets of test tasks with answer options for self-assessment. Within elective courses, students also analyze test items similar to those included in the KROK licensing examination, with particular attention to terminology specific to different medical fields. Integrated testing enhances students' motivation to study foreign languages, strengthens their confidence in achieving learning goals, and helps systematize knowledge across all types of language activities.

During classes in Foreign Language for Professional Purposes, it is important to strengthen pedagogical interaction between instructors and students. Such interaction facilitates more effective knowledge acquisition and promotes the development of practical skills, communicative experience, and social engage-

ment required for the future professional activities of physicians. The integration of information and communication technologies into foreign language instruction is also essential. The Internet provides a virtual environment that overcomes temporal and spatial constraints and enables authentic communication with real interlocutors on topics of shared interest. Multimedia technologies engage multiple sensory channels by combining written text, graphic images, video, photographs, and audio materials. This integration creates a simulated communicative environment that closely resembles real-life interaction. Electronic textbooks, practical manuals, and multimedia learning programmes can therefore be used not only to support the acquisition of linguistic material but also to develop the main language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, these resources allow instructors to conduct ongoing, thematic, and final assessments of students' language proficiency. Multimedia tools can be used both during classroom instruction and in independent learning. As a result, they increase the effectiveness and overall productivity of foreign language learning.

**Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research.** Foreign language professional training is an essential component of the education of future healthcare professionals. It is also a key factor in ensuring their competitiveness in the contemporary international professional environment. This training integrates general language skills with specialized medical terminology, emphasizes professional communication, aligns with core medical disciplines, and simulates authentic professional scenarios. Its effectiveness depends on the implementation of interdisciplinary integration, interactive teaching methods, information and communication technologies, and the individualization of instruction. Modernizing foreign language education in medical higher education institutions will enhance students' readiness for professional foreign language communication and support international collaboration.

Future research should focus on analyzing international practices in organizing foreign language training at medical universities. Such analysis will facilitate the adaptation of effective strategies to the Ukrainian higher education context and promote best practices in professional language education.

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