

USING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN MEDICAL EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN THE UZBEK CONTEXT

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the significance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in medical education has grown worldwide. In Uzbekistan, future medical professionals are increasingly required to read international academic literature, participate in English-medium discussions, and contribute to global medical forums. However, several systemic issues such as the lack of ESP-trained instructors, insufficient resources tailored to medical contexts, and limited integration of ESP in the curriculum continue to hinder the effective implementation of ESP programs in medical institutions. This article, written in collaboration between a language educator and a medical lecturer, examines current challenges and proposes feasible pedagogical strategies to enhance ESP instruction within Uzbekistan's medical education landscape.

2. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore the implementation and challenges of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in medical education in Uzbekistan. A combination of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) data collection techniques was used. The participants included 50 medical students and 10 English instructors from various medical institutes. The survey aimed to identify students' current English proficiency levels, learning needs, and experiences with ESP. In-depth interviews with instructors explored challenges in curriculum delivery, material development, and student motivation. Data were analyzed using thematic coding for qualitative responses and descriptive statistics for the quantitative data.

3. Results

The results revealed that the majority of medical students recognize the importance of English in their academic and professional development. Over 70% of respondents indicated a strong need for medical vocabulary and academic communication skills. However, more than half expressed dissatisfaction with the current ESP curriculum, citing outdated materials and insufficient contact hours. Instructors noted the lack of specialized ESP training and difficulty in aligning content with students' medical background. These findings highlight a significant gap between students' needs and the current ESP course offerings in medical universities across Uzbekistan.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study emphasize the critical role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in medical education, particularly in non-English-speaking countries like Uzbekistan. The gap between students' expectations and the current instructional practices suggests a need for curriculum reform that aligns more closely with learners' professional objectives. Instructors must receive ongoing training to effectively teach medical English, and institutions should invest in developing localized ESP materials. Furthermore, collaborative course design involving both language and medical specialists could bridge the gap between theoretical content and practical communication skills.

Addressing these issues is essential for producing healthcare professionals who can engage confidently in international academic and clinical settings.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study highlighted the growing importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in medical education in Uzbekistan and identified key challenges that hinder its effective implementation. There is a clear necessity for curriculum development, instructor training, and the creation of localized, context-specific teaching resources. We recommend that medical institutions collaborate with language departments to design interdisciplinary ESP programs. Furthermore, teacher development workshops and integration of authentic medical materials should be prioritized. Only through such collaborative and contextualized efforts can Uzbekistan ensure the development of globally competent medical professionals with strong English communication skills.

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