

ENHANCING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS A TOOL IN TEACHING  
MEDICAL ENGLISH CONVERSATION AT KIMYO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN  
TASHKENT

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**Abstract:** *The article substantiates the importance of teaching English to students in the medical profession. Nowadays, English plays an important role in medicine, and becomes the international language of communication in the world of medical science. Proficiency in English gives new perspectives and opportunities for medical students. The development of communication skills is the key to improving a foreign language, and also increasing the effectiveness of communication with patients. In addition, the use of new methods is necessary in English lessons as a means of developing speaking skills and forming an active vocabulary. Appropriate strategies, as well as an effective approach and relevant materials chosen by the teacher, can facilitate this process and make the learning process more fascinating.*

**Keywords:** *English for medical students, English for specific purposes (ESP), communication skills.*

**Introduction:** In a rapidly developing world, the importance and necessity of knowing a foreign language such as English in the field of medicine has become relevant and even a prerequisite. English is the international language of communication in the fields of trade and business, medicine, tourism, education, as well as science and technology. An international language is a language that can be used for communication by a significant number of people around the world. According to statistics, in 2023, English is estimated to remain the most widely spoken language (first and second language) in the world. It is spoken by over 1.5 billion people worldwide (statisticsanddata.org, 2023).

Nowadays, the education system of Uzbekistan is aimed at mastering a foreign language from school. In school years, they teach the basics of grammar, correct intonation and spelling, and also replenish the vocabulary with commonly used words. Upon admission to higher educational institutions, applicants must have a certificate of knowledge of a foreign

language, or take an exam for knowledge of a foreign language. In addition, the study of a foreign language continues in higher educational institutions, but is built on the basis of existing knowledge and is aimed at mastering a “professional” language.

Students studying in higher educational institutions try to have knowledge about cutting-edge discoveries in medicine, articles about such discoveries, in turn, are most often published in English. Therefore, knowledge of English opens up new perspectives for medical students, and also helps to exchange and enrich knowledge and experience.

### **Literature Review**

The need for English as a professional language in medicine is now beyond doubt. Scientific literature and the Internet are just two examples of the paramount need for understanding and expressing yourself in written and spoken English (Ribes and Ros, 2005).

Many people are concerned about the adequacy of communication between professionals and clients, especially in the healthcare sector. Communication problems may arise from the professional's lack of understanding of sociocultural factors, lack of interpersonal skills, or insufficient English language proficiency (ELP) (Hayes and Farnill, 1993).

As mentioned in Hull's (2015) article, a *language for specific purposes*, functional ability at the level of proficiency in a standard language is not applicable to every academic or professional situation. People who may have a very large or wide vocabulary and who can also speak well may still experience difficulty when faced with a need for a very specific or technical language, hence the need for specialized language education. This field is called language for specific purposes and exists in many countries. In addition, she notes that in the broadest sense of English learning in the 21st century, the need for a discipline-specific language will be essential for interaction, discussion, and communication across borders. She writes that, *Medical English* provides an example of how a professional language for specific purposes can shed light on the problems faced by other languages as they move towards defining their own subgenre of medical language. A brief discussion of this language genre will offer a wealth of information related to this area and make it clear how this material; these principles can easily be applied to the teaching and learning of medical language, no matter what language is commonly used. Moreover, Hull remarks that while *Medical English* is a general term, *English for Medical Purposes* is a more formal designation.

Medical universities also provide a foreign language course with subsequent testing of knowledge in the form of an exam or test. During the course, students learn vocabulary related to their future profession, and also continue to improve their knowledge of grammar and pronunciation, in most cases students are taught in English. However, the teaching of English does not end there, and students have the opportunity to further improve, as well as apply the acquired knowledge in their practical activities, both in their student years and in subsequent work. Many medical universities of Uzbekistan offer this opportunity: KIMYO International University in Tashkent, AKFA University, Tashkent Pharmaceutical Institute, Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute, Tashkent State Dental Institute and others.

Medical English conversation course is taught for the first-year students majoring in "Beauty and esthetics" at Kimyo International University in Tashkent. The objectives of the course are to develop students' interpersonal communication skills, enhance their understanding of the importance of communication skills in medical practice, the doctor-patient relationship, as well as enriching students' vocabulary in terms of specific concepts and common medical lexical items. The course also emphasizes history-taking skills (especially building a relationship with the patient, asking questions, listening skills, nonverbal communication skills, and providing structure for the consultation).

In addition, one of the forms of education, as well as research activities of students is participation in scientific and practical conferences, which have different levels of conduct: intra-university, regional or international. By participating in international conferences, as well as in conferences with international participation, also exhibitions students have the opportunity to listen to the works of representatives of other countries, which are most often reported in English. In addition, students participate as translators at such conferences and fairs, which contributes improve understanding and communication with international medical students. These exhibition-forums attract the attention of professionals due to its convenient format, which combines an extensive exposition and a program of professional events, among which practical conferences and master classes play an essential role. Medical exhibitions and conferences Uzbekistan 2023-2024: Uzbekistan Stomatology 2023, AptekaExpo Central Asia / TechPharm 2023, TIHE 2023, III International Student Scientific and Practical Conference and other events (World Expo, 2023).

According to a study by Karimnia and Khodashenas (2018), they found that the majority of students complained about the shortcomings of medical

books. They also found that students must be proficient in English before they can take ESP courses. Moreover, they believed that involving students in the development of ESP books increases students' motivation, develops their critical thinking abilities, and encourages them to participate in various language learning tasks and improve their language skills. They also added that including all language skills in the ESP book makes learning more enjoyable in order to achieve course goals and therefore results in effective learning.

As it was mentioned by Webber (1995), there are medical English courses that are offered not only at universities but also in other institutions such as technical schools and hospitals where the motivation of students may not be purely academic and thus there is justification for integrating academic skills with other more important ones. meets the needs of everyday life. In this way, the student will see the personal relevance of the material presented and the language they encounter, and it will be possible to build a bridge between Medical English and the everyday world. In the field of medicine, perhaps more fortunate than the teachers of other ESP courses, because while some sciences, such as the so-called exact sciences, are removed from the world of everyday life, medicine is a discipline associated not only with laboratory research, research and hypothetical reasoning, but is also relevant to people. In this way, it is possible to bring the outside world into the classroom and create activities based on real situations, using language that doctors and other healthcare professionals actually use for real purposes.

According to the study of Choudhary and Gupta (2015), like many other people-based professions, communication skills are essential to the practice of medicine. This is the backbone over which areas of patient care lie, such as first contact interviews with patients, looking for related and additional problems, counseling the patient, explaining treatment options, its complications and recommendations for follow-up. Traditional medical education provides students with theoretical and practical knowledge about the processes of disease and provides them with training in diagnostic and treatment methods, but does not address the communication skills that are most needed in dealing with patients. In addition, it is vital to know, that the ability to communicate effectively is a core competency of medical practitioners. The benefits of effective communication cannot be overstated. Instilling good communication skills habits in the formative years will help medical students and future doctors. Communication skills training in the formative years is a positive investment

for a better future health of society. Regular courses on effective communication should be included in the medical curriculum.

Furthermore, English is the key to communicating with foreigners, especially when it comes to medicine. Good communication and proficiency of language between physician and patient is vital to all medical consultations. Physicians need to build relationships, show empathy, gather information, explain concepts, and plan treatment with their patients. Medical students must prove they are competent in interpersonal and communication skills before they graduate. Approaches to teaching these skills to medical students include face-to-face teaching, online courses, programs that give students personalized or tailored feedback, and role play with peers or with actors playing the role of the patient (Gilligan, Powell, Lynagh, Ward, Lonsdale, Harvey, James, Rich, Dewi, Nepal, Croft, and Silverman, 2021).

Based on a study by Hausberg, Hergert, Kröger, Bullinger, Rose and Andreas (2012), where students were given the opportunity to develop their basic communication skills in role-play scenarios with peers and role-play sessions with simulated patients. The use of simulated patients or actors has proven to be a particularly effective method of training communication skills. In parallel with these exercises, students developed guidelines for physician-to-physician communication that cover the essential elements of physician-patient communication in line with the Kalamazoo Consensus Statement. The Kalamazoo Consensus Statement identifies seven evidence-based "essential elements" or objectives for effective communication between clinician and patient and provides the skills needed to every element. These guidelines were then used as a basis for further learning to provide students with a guided tool focused on the core issues of good patient-physician communication. The guide included brief descriptions of skills related to each of the following areas: (1) building doctor-patient relationships; (2) opening the discussion; (3) managing emotions; (4) study of details; (5) reach agreement on further procedures; and (6) debriefing of the consultation.

Table 1

Table 1: Schedule for communication training program (Choudhary and Gupta, 2015)	
Teaching objective	Teaching/learning methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude toward communication skills</li> <li>• Basic communication skills</li> <li>• Importance of communication in medicine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures (PPT), role plays, group</li> <li>• discussions, brainstorming</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of effective communication</li> <li>• Patient interview skill (Calgary-Cambridge model)</li> <li>• Basic counseling skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures, role plays, videos on</li> <li>• patient interviews</li> <li>• Group discussions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special communications, informed consent, bereavement counseling, breaking bad news, and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures (PPT), brainstorming,</li> <li>• role plays</li> </ul>

Good communication skills are an advantage in medical practice. Effective communication wins the clinician's trust and patient compliance and helps build a healthy relationship between doctor and patient. relation. These important interpersonal skills can be mastered in theoretical years and practiced to perfection over many years (Choudhary and Gupta, 2015).

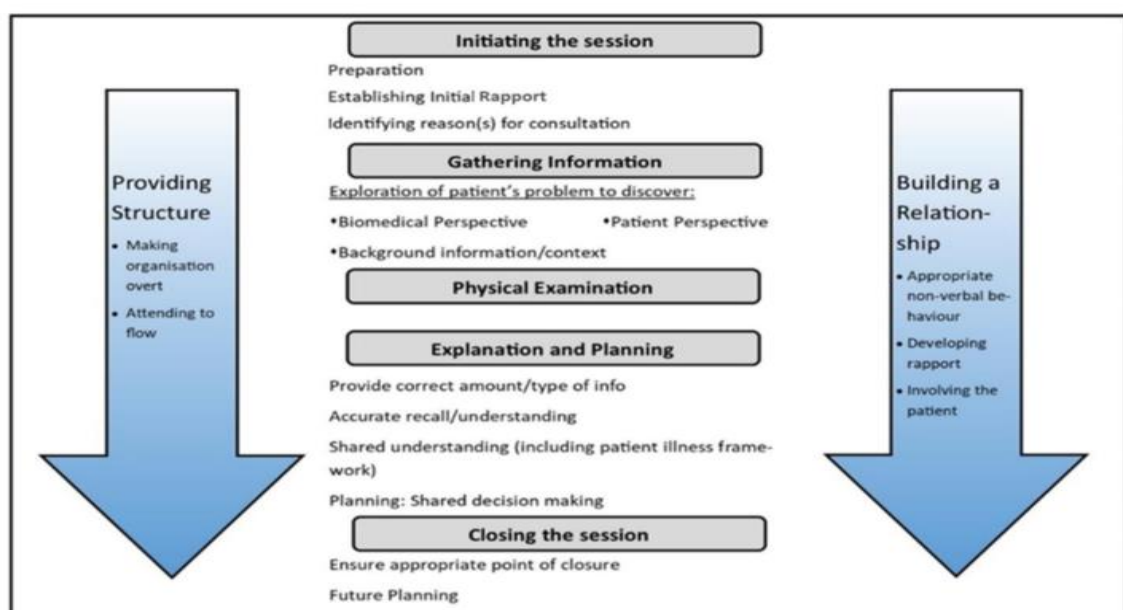


Figure 1. Layout of the Calgary-Cambridge Model- Detailed (Roberts, 2015).



The framework of the Calgary-Cambridge system provides the structure needed to ensure that all aspects of the consultation are covered. The interdependence of information gathering on physical assessment and verbal communication in the natural flow of real medical assessment is illustrated. (Roberts, 2015).

Nayak and Kadeangadi (2019) recommend developing communication skills training programs and including them in the English language program curriculum so that medical students learn and also pay more attention to communication skills and foreign language improvement. Instilling habits of good communication skills during the formative years will help medical students and future medical practitioners. Teaching communication skills in English in the formative years is a positive contribution to improving the health of society in the future. Regular courses on effective communication and foreign language practice should be included in the medical school curriculum.

Moreover, communication skills, a skill that is especially important for future nurses when providing medical services to private patients. Nurses should be ready not only to translate the name of a drug, medical device or medical care into a foreign language, but also to offer communicative interaction, create a comfortable and productive treatment atmosphere.

Modernization of the content of the work program of the discipline can have a positive impact on the results of students, as well as updating the thematic plan in accordance with the modern requirements of society for a specialist in medicine and the development of appropriate methodological resources is one of the most important components of successful professionally oriented language training of future specialists, which lays the foundations professional oriented speech activity not only in a foreign, but also in the native language.

### **Conclusion**

Nowadays, one of the prerequisites for the scientific and pedagogical activity of a university teacher in Uzbekistan has recently become English proficiency at a level sufficient to develop and read lecture courses for students from other countries, publish scientific articles in foreign journals, participate in international conferences, and have the opportunity exchange knowledge and experience with colleagues from other countries, and additionally maintain contacts in the international academic environment. Furthermore, the study of a foreign language is a mandatory component in the training of specialists in medical institutions at the present time. Based on the previous statement, it is also vital for students to know

English, from which it can be concluded that at the present stage, teaching foreign languages is a mandatory aspect of obtaining higher professional education. Moreover, knowledge of a foreign language is a tool in learning, so it contributes to obtaining up-to-date information in various fields, such as medicine. In addition, proficiency in a foreign language will provide an opportunity to train in English-speaking countries and improve their skills, as well as accept foreign patients, publish articles in English, and provide research for review to the international medical community, also reading a huge amount of modern scientific literature that is published in English. The concept of teaching a foreign language to students of medical universities is based on the specifics of their chosen future profession, in order to build an optimal program that can meet their needs and fulfill their expectations in a professionally oriented field. The growth of professional skills of specialists, intensively applying the above methods of using knowledge of a foreign language, act as a motivation for other colleagues, and increase the level of competitiveness in professional medical activities.

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