

Training Methods for Students-Foreigners with The English Level Lower Than A1

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Abstract

The English language level of students-foreigners who are going to study at Ukrainian Universities plays a crucial role especially in the cases when their future practical lessons and lectures are delivered in English. The group of Turkish students who had to undergo the training in Medical University as future doctors demonstrated during the preliminary linguistic tests that English (and Ukrainian) knowledge of the majority of students was even lower than A1 level. The causes were as follows: the low level of school education, geographical position of their native places, i.e. their remoteness from the cultural centers of the country, age (the younger the worse) and others. The situation made the Ukrainian teachers, who were responsible for their English training, use some uncommon methods, which should have led to positive results. The methods are as follows: first of all to brake the opposition "teacher – students" which allows to put teachers and students in the same social position; to forbid the use of computer translator during the lessons except for learning the new lexis to stop the irresponsible attitude of students to classes; to control psychological situation during the training and follow the University psychologists advices. The results of such methods use are described in the presented article.

Keywords: *Training Process, Survey, Medical Terminology, Alphabet, Transcription.*

Introduction

Integration processes preceding full globalization pose not only economic, geopolitical and cultural tasks for nations, but also linguistic ones. It is obvious that humanity, united by the common idea of prosperity and mutual assistance, also needs other objects for understanding and cooperation, namely language, which can be another link in such unification. Many nations have already come to the conclusion that it is the English language with its analytical type of content presentation, simple (but not primitive, with deep subtext) and convenient form of narration that deserves the honour of becoming the language of international communication. The following official data can be cited, which clearly show the spread of the English language on the planet: English is spoken by the population of 67 countries; for 380 million people English is their native language, for 1,077 billion people English is a second language, etc. Of course, these data make a great impression.

It is known that in order to carry out language expansion, the English government supported the so-called Simple English project, which offered simplified vocabulary and grammar for peoples with dissimilar types of language systems. However, in a country like Ukraine, the attempt to spread the Simple English project was met with poorly concealed rejection, especially among University students. And this can be explained. Future specialists, young and ambitious, having received a good technical or humanitarian education, in no case wanted to lose in anything to their peers and colleagues abroad, especially in such an important area

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for the image as language. However, if the expected success is observed with the spoken (literary) language in educational institutions of Ukraine, then the situation with the so-called specialized (professional) languages, i.e. languages for professional communication, leaves much to be desired. Future specialists, only after studying at universities and acquiring knowledge in their future specialty, can begin to study their professional English, which they need for future communication with foreign colleagues, participation in scientific conferences, and familiarization with new research in any field of science and technology.

The matter is that the student groups in Ukrainian universities include not only Ukrainian citizens, but also foreign ones who want to receive an inexpensive but fundamental education. Thus there is a need to carry on training for foreign students in order to prepare them for specialized language communication with the teachers delivering future lectures and practical classes, since the majority of these types of work is presented in English.

Odessa Polytechnic University, in which the training process described in this article took place, is a unique base for teaching English (Ukrainian) to foreign students entering in the future almost any educational institution in Odessa and other cities thanks to, firstly, the existence of special Foreign Student Department and, secondly, the teachers experienced in methodology. Here they (students) master English and Ukrainian and subsequently enter the universities that they initially chose to obtain their future profession. For example, future medical students undergo training at this exact university.

The goal of the article is to describe the pedagogical experiment of teachers of the Department of Foreign Languages of Odessa Polytechnic University (Ukraine), working with foreign students. This article examines the stages of the training process, the object of which were the students from Turkey.

Literature Review

Today in the available literature on language teaching methods, it is hard to find a more popular topic than teaching English (or another) language as a foreign language or L2. And there is a completely logical explanation for this, since the processes of globalization require, as we have already mentioned, not only a unified economic system, but also a single international language of communication.

The subjects of the articles is incredibly broad. Let us list the main trends in this problem, which interests the authors of the presented work. First of all, the attention of researchers (Zheng et al., 2024; Dewaele et al., 2015) is attracted by the psychological (emotional) state of students taking an English language course: an uncontrollable level of anxiety when trying to use English in communication (Martin & Alvarez Valdivia, 2017; Wu, 2024), or, on the contrary, the pleasure of using a foreign language (Ebn-Abbasi & Nushi, 2022), the need to develop self-regulation and self-support in learning (Botero et al., 2019), the formation of motivation (Heidig & Clarebout, 2011), the influence of the teacher's personality on the psychological state of students (Ahmadi-Azad et al., 2020; Fakieh, 2022; Bayona & Castañeda, 2017; Reeve et al., 2018; Chamorro-Premuzic & Adrian Furnham, 2003). Much attention is also paid to the description of gestures, for example, as social signals acting with the help of pedagogical agents (Davis & Antonenko, 2017); gestures outside or inside the field of vision (Davis & Vincent, 2021; Alibali et al., 2001)

Of course one of the largest sections in learning English as a foreign language is the use of computer technology or gadgets in language teaching. Thus, the results of the study on the impact of online machine translation (Tuilan et al., 2023), various mobile devices for learning vocabulary (Zakian et al., 2022; Zhuohan & Aryadoust, 2021) or applications during study abroad (Kang & Shin, 2024) on language acquisition success are very convincing. However, no less convincing are the results of the survey, which demonstrated that the use of so-called technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) does not affect the level of language proficiency at all (Yu, 2023).

Although the description of surveys among students is not a priority in this article, nevertheless, teaching English as a foreign language to foreign students (especially students living in the Middle East), as well as their motivation in this matter, may be of unconditional interest (Ebn-Abbasi & Nushi, 2022).

The works of Turkish teachers on the introduction of so-called gamification elements into the educational process (Taşkara et al., 2024; Alabbasi, 2018) turned out to be one of the most valuable sources of methodological ideas, firstly, because the gamification methodology was applied specifically in Turkish universities (which meets the interests of the authors of the article, who dealt with Turkish students), and secondly, it gave the authors creative scope for introducing this methodology into their educational process. A valuable contribution to the literature review of this article was also a study on the history of introducing the idea of gamification into the educational process and the results of modern studies showing certain educational advantages of such an idea (Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020).

Of particular importance to the authors of this article are studies devoted to teaching foreign students abroad and the teaching methods used (Money Penny & Aldrich, 2024; Anderson et al., 2015; Frey & Tropp, 2006; Quan, 2019).

The reviewed literary resources have shown the significant multifaceted nature of the subject of teaching a foreign language as a second (L2) and the enormous importance currently attached to this subject. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the authors, this article may well claim to be the one with the elements of novelty, since no corresponding analogs have been found in the reviewed literature.

Research Methodology

The number of students who arrived from Turkey to study at Odessa National Polytechnic University was 35 people, and all of them were divided into three groups. The average number of students in a group was 11-12 people, the groups consisted of girls (3-4 people in each group) and young men, respectively, 8-9 people. The future professions of students referred to various fields of medicine: surgery, dentistry, anesthesiology, etc. The reason why they came to Ukraine is a fairly modest tuition fee compared to other countries, and especially to America.

It is usually assumed that foreign students come to Ukraine with a certain level of English language proficiency which is sufficient for everyday communication. According to the program of training the foreign students the teachers had to prepare them for further study at the Odessa Medical University in the faculties of dentistry, surgery, etc. The final goal of the training program is formulated as follows: “The purpose of studying the discipline is the formation of the necessary communicative ability in the spheres of professional and situational communication in oral and written forms, the skills of practical mastery of a professional language in various types of speech activity in the scope of topics determined by professional needs; mastering professional information through English-language sources”.

The training process lasts two semesters, i.e. eight months, including credit and examination classes.

At the preliminary stage, before the course began, several types of testing were carried out to obtain the data necessary to determine the further teaching strategy: data on the level of English, data on the level of Ukrainian. Then several surveys were performed to obtain data on the age of the students; on the geographical location of the places in Turkey where the students came from; data on the educational status of the schools, colleges or lyceums where the students studied in their home country.

The linguistic test demonstrating the level of knowledge of Ukrainian and English languages showed the following. The level of knowledge of Ukrainian (the state language of Ukraine) for almost all students was correlated with the A1 level. In fact, it was even lower but A1 was taken as a basis, because there is no marker below this level.

The results of the English language proficiency test showed a slightly more optimistic picture. Out of 35 people, 5 students (14.3%) showed level B2 and were quite advanced in English, 18 people (51.4%) showed an average (not very high) level of A2. And finally, 12 people (34.3%) showed the results even below level A1. They knew only a few words that were necessary for minimal communication such as ‘thank you’, ‘hallo (hi)’, ‘please’, ‘good-bye’ ‘guy’ and often explained themselves simply with signs or gestures.

Age, geography and education surveys showed the following information. The age of the majority of students (85-86%) was no more than 18-19 years old. However, each group included several people (2-3 students, total number of 5 students) who were 25-27 years old. The survey, which determined the geography of the places of residence of the students, showed that the majority came from small towns in the north and west of Turkey (67%), several people from small towns on the border with Kurdistan (9%) and five people from the suburbs of Istanbul (14%). The educational survey presented the following data: the majority of students (67%) studied in small provincial colleges, 9% of students graduated from local municipal schools, five students (14.3%) from colleges in the suburbs of Istanbul.

After reviewing and correlating the test and survey data, the following picture emerged. Of the 35 foreign students, five people aged 25-27 had a secondary education close to European, had a fairly high level of English, although their level of knowledge of the Ukrainian language was quite low. The age of all the other students did not exceed 18-19, the level of proficiency in Ukrainian was very low, the level of proficiency in English showed the index A1-A2. Obviously, there were several reasons for the low educational level of knowledge and, specifically, English: a fairly low social status of students' families, weak educational programs typical for provincial cities, lack of interest in obtaining a decent school education, but the interest of families in obtaining a good (monetary) specialty for their children. We can also add here the danger of living in places of contact with Kurdistan – one of the most explosive places in the world in general and in Turkey – in particular.

So the teachers faced a very difficult task: to teach English to foreign students at least in the field of general medicine. The main peculiarity in performing this task were the following facts: the students knew only their native language, Turkish; had very weak knowledge of the Ukrainian language, i.e. the state language of Ukraine (only greetings and polite words “please”, “thank you”), and almost all students did not know English to the extent necessary for communication both in the social and professional fields. In their turn the teachers knew the state language of Ukraine, as well as English, its theoretical and practical sides, had extensive teaching experience and did not know Turkish at all. Thus it can be said that there were no linguistic points of contact between students and teachers.

The first few lessons clearly showed that under such conditions both sides – students and teachers – could not understand each other at all. It should be noted that a very strict and mandatory condition of the training was the prohibition of using computer translators, which of course would have made the task easier, but would have forced students to constantly turn to the computer, without trying to learn vocabulary or grammar of the English language.

Due to the obvious presence of an extreme situation, an urgent meeting of English teachers was organized, where strategic and tactical directions for the future training process were adopted. The strategy stipulated the following points of the plan:

since any educational process presupposes an undoubted opposition “teacher-students”, and, of course, the leading role of the teacher in this process, since he (she) possesses the knowledge that the students do not have and which he (teacher) can offer them, to make an attempt to destroy this opposition and put teachers and students on the same educational, social and humanitarian level;

to make an experiment in which both students and teachers will have the same function, i.e. each side of the “opposition” will play the role of both a teacher and a student;

to select the linguistic objects of the experiment: for the teachers from Ukraine – to study Turkish as a foreign language, for the students from Turkey – to study English (specialized) as a foreign language. It was assumed that each group participating in the experiment would better understand the difficulties of the opposite side – the students would understand the complexities of teaching work, and the teachers would remember their own mistakes and “torments” when studying a foreign language;

in order to support the idea of breaking the “teacher – student” opposition, to start English and Turkish classes directly with medical concepts and discourse (specialized language) but not with everyday concepts

(colloquial English) because of time constraints – the students had to undergo the training in Medical University in 6-7 months. Since neither the students nor the teachers had a professional medical education, i.e. they did not know the specialty of “Medicine” in theoretical and applied aspects (of course, except for cases of direct contact with doctors and dentists as patients), and also since both sides were not familiar with the specialized language of various fields of medicine, they were at the same educational level in this matter. But the skills of teaching professional lexis and texts in different fields of discourse, as well as the results of intensive research of scientific discourse, gave some advantages to the teachers’ side;

every month, or maybe twice a month depending on the situation, to hold a small conference where teachers will exchange experiences, describe the specifics of teaching, give and receive advice from colleagues;

to offer students, in turn, to also hold meetings or sessions when the need arises;

in extraordinary cases – conflict situations, lack of personal experience – to seek advices from specialists at the University’s Department of Psychology.

The tactical features of the future training process were as follows:

under no circumstances use a computer translator themselves and do not allow students to do so except in cases of studying foreign words and their pronunciation when doing homework;

the teachers should not passively watch if students encounter any kind of dead-end situation in the process of explaining the material or during practical repetition, but play the role of a “trigger” who can help and start the process;

the University psychologists suggested including in the tactical tasks not only educational or linguistic aspects, but also the psychological ones, which can stimulate the students’ attention, concentrate them on the teaching process, for example, the teachers should not miss a single opportunity to remind the students about their future or about the hopes their families have for them; constantly emphasize that learning vocabulary or grammar of a language is a fairly simple action, that later, when they study their specialty, they will need much more mental effort, etc.; do not give grades, but use psychological assessments, i.e. to encourage or criticize;

the experiment should be started by the teachers, since they know better how to start learning a language;

a mandatory requirement for both students and teachers was the preliminary familiarization with at least the alphabet and pronunciation of letters in English and Turkish.

The question of creating the groups was somewhat controversial, in particular whether to form groups in accordance with language level, i.e., for example, to put the students who knew English at level B1 or B2 in the separate group, leave those whose level was slightly higher than A2 in another group, and the third group with the students who had practically no language skills. However, during the discussion, the point of view on including students with different levels of knowledge in the same groups, and especially with a high level of knowledge of the language, won out, so that in critical cases they can support other weaker comrades, and if necessary to explain to them topics that are difficult to understand.

A description of the most successful, in terms of the achieved results, training process of mastering English as a foreign language in the group of one of the teachers is offered. Dear readers must agree that it is absolutely unrealistic to describe all the details of such a complex process in one article, therefore examples of completely ordinary, daily repeated actions of students and teachers were highlighted and described.

For a clearer presentation the entire process was divided into stages. The stages depended not only on the time allocated for training but also on the results, i.e., if the material is not learned the period of time for learning can be increased, or vice versa – if the material is learned before the allotted time the time period is reduced.

Results and Discussions

First of all let us present an example of the beginning of the training process.

Stage 1. It was the teachers who began the educational process. The first lesson was devoted to human anatomy, which is mandatory in the list of lectures at a medical university for students of any specialty. The teachers present the students with the necessary material in pictures, where parts of the body and the location of internal organs are drawn, and they are named in English, but the pronunciation in Turkish is also given, for example, heart [hağt], stomach [stomak], jaw [co] etc. The pictures are static, just a drawing without movement. All these words have to be learned by heart.

The next lesson, which the students conducted, turned out to be much more interesting from the point of view of methodology. At first they lined up in a row, for the teachers it was not yet clear why. They presented pictures (not even computer graphics or a screenshot, but a real drawing with felt-tip pens), where they themselves drew parts of the body and the location of internal organs, but, unlike the pictures of the teachers, they are dynamic, i.e. the following pictures show a gradual change and develop some movement, i.e. as in animation, movements are captured: one series – heart contractions, the next series of pictures – arm and leg movements, then a change in pictures to the movement of the upper and lower jaws, etc. The inscriptions on the pictures were in Turkish, but just like the teachers, there was pronunciation in English letters. (Although the Latin alphabet is adopted in Turkish, the letters do not always have the same pronunciation as in English). For example, the pictures describing the contraction of the heart show the entire cycle of contraction of the cardiac muscle (atrial systole, atrial systole), ventricular systole, ventricle systole, and diastole, diastole.

For such creative and proactive work the students received the highest scores. And already here it was possible to come to the conclusion that the students were already close to using words in speech that denote actions, i.e. the verbs, which is of course a much more complex process, since the units describing actions are more abstract than those used for objects.

The students' task was not only to show, but also to pronounce all the words that were presented in the images. It cannot be said that everyone learned the vocabulary on anatomy, but sincere disappointment, if the term was difficult to remember, showed that they really tried to learn. They simply lacked the skill of learning by heart.

At this stage the accumulation of medical terms gradually took place although with great difficulty, which is quite complex for many students due to their low educational level. There were often situations when students expressed regret that they had taken on such a uneasy task as studying medicine, and the lesson was often interrupted by the exclamations of such kind: 'Bu sadece iğrenç' [That's rubbish], 'Hiçbir şey istemiyorum' [I want nothing], etc.

After a few lessons the teachers offer the students to memorize the 10 most frequent English verbs with pronunciation in Turkish and some professional word combinations, for example: to have [hev] (to have a pain [hev e peyn] , to have a headache [hev e hedeyk]), to ache [eyk], to make [meyk] (to make an injection [meyk injekşn]), to go [gou], to move [muv], to exist [ekzyst], to work [vök] (the heart works [hat vöks], etc. (Once more would like to remind that the transcription reflects the Turkish pronunciation).

An attempt was made to form sentences with the words and phrases that were previously presented by the students themselves and that were given in previous lessons. The slowest learners were stimulated by the students who have a higher level of English. They showed how it should be done. Of course, not everyone succeeded, since they simply do not have the skill to study vocabulary, many did not understand what to do, many immediately refused, since they considered it a very difficult task.

The teachers asked the students to say these short sentences (phrases) in Turkish to help teachers master Turkish. They readily say: Diş ağrım var [dysh arym var] (to have a toothache), enjeksiyon yapmak [enjeksiyon yapmak] (to make an injection) and other phrases with new vocabulary.

The experienced teachers played on this “stupid teacher – smart student” contradiction quite effectively, giving compliments, noting the students’ successes in comparison with the teachers. In critical situations, when the students who were not used to regular study simply refused to study, the teachers began their game, for example, asking to quiz them on Turkish terms on anatomy or medical instruments used in dentistry, and playing the role of students, begging for a better grade, promising to improve it, to answer better next time, etc. (İyi olacağım ‘I will be good’, iyi öğreteceğim | I will learn well’, anneme söyleme ‘Don’t tell my mother’, daha iyisini biliyorum ‘I know better’, etc.). Soon the students began to laugh.

The teachers’ position in teaching Turkish was as follows. In their classes, the students also began with the vocabulary, not medical vocabulary, which they knew poorly even in their own language, but with colloquial vocabulary and insistently demanded to learn it. The teachers learned it, although with great difficulty, but quite successfully. However, when it was necessary to move from individual words to full-fledged statements and use the whole sentences, the question of studying grammar arose. The students were unable to fulfill the teachers’ requests to explain this or that grammatical phenomenon, to show the fundamental structure of the Turkish language, since they were not familiar with the theoretical issues of their native language and therefore were not capable of general explanations of certain rules. Therefore, the students’ insistence on playing the role of teachers soon came to naught.

Exactly two weeks later, the students began to admit that teaching duties were very difficult for them, that they imagined the teachers as just judges or bosses, whose main functions were to listen and give grades. Therefore, at the next meeting of the teachers, it was decided to take independent steps to learn Turkish, i.e. to turn to the textbooks themselves. But this did not mean that the students were deprived of the teachers’ function. We would like to describe one of the situations that can explain this statement. For example, after several weeks of training, the teachers came to the conclusion that simple psychological support or, on the contrary, psychological pressure, did not give the necessary effect, the students did not understand clearly the real state of their successes/failures. Therefore, at the meeting of the teachers, it was decided to give grades. The students reacted immediately and began to demand to give the teachers the grades they deserved in Turkish if they did not prepare the tasks or demonstrated weak knowledge, and even started a special document for fixing teachers’ achievements/failures. And throughout the entire course, the students were happy to mark the lack of enthusiasm of the teachers for learning Turkish, which, as they said, was “very simple” as compared to English, as well as their inability to learn the language.

Putting down the grades turned out to be a trigger for the further deterioration of psychological situation in the groups. The seeming equality between teachers and students began to generate the anarchic moods among the latter under the slogan “it’s none of your business how we study, we study if we want – we don’t study if we don’t want”. They stopped obeying the teachers, did not make the tasks, did not respond to the teachers’ comments, and skipped classes. This was a very difficult stage for everyone.

On the advice of psychologists, the teachers were forced to use the most unpopular measure – to turn to the students’ relatives, families. Immediately, during one of the classes, the Skype platform was turned on and online meetings with families were held in the presence of students, with demonstration of the students’ grades, data on their absences, psychological moods, a list of absentees. The emotional shock of the parents was difficult to describe, they did not understand at all what is happening, since their children usually answered positively to the obligatory questions about their studies. The oldest in the family, who enjoyed general respect and stand at the highest level in the family hierarchy, joint the conversation.

But there were also some surprises for relatives. For example, they were pleasantly surprised by the fact that the teachers try to speak Turkish with them, maybe with mistakes, but understandably enough. And when they learnt that it was their children who, with their persistence, contributed significantly to the knowledge of Turkish in adults, they felt some pride for them. Therefore, the usual students’ excuses that everything is very difficult and impossible were met with the collective protests of such kind “but the teachers managed to learn to speak Turkish” or “you managed to teach them”.

From this moment on, all mutual claims ceased and the very difficult but necessary work for everyone continued.

This was the longest (almost 4 months) stage and perhaps the most difficult and complex both psychologically and cognitively. However, the attempt, which was envisaged in paragraph 1 of the plan drawn up at the first meeting of the teachers – to destroy the opposition “teacher – students” – was successfully performed. The teachers and students managed to become a single team, each member of which needs support, and who should learn to trust, listen and understand each other.

At the end of this stage another conference was held with the psychology teachers. They warned that a further policy of “carrot and stick” was incompatible with the atmosphere of trust that currently existed in the group and that had to be preserved at all costs. Therefore, they suggested a completely different approach that the teachers should maintain towards the students – to practice and demonstrate as convincingly as possible an absolute confidence that they are fully capable of mastering the competencies that were mentioned above as the goals of the training program, i.e. the ability to read, translate, write and communicate in English in the field of professional communication.

Stage 2. This stage is directly related to the beginning of training in translation of specialized texts related to general areas of medical discourse. This was the first time that the students translated an English text on medicine into their native language. The teachers had to translate this text both into their native language (Ukrainian) and into Turkish, which was also for the first time for them.

The students already knew many terms, could compose and pronounce the simplest sentences. There is already an understanding of who will really continue their studies at the medical university, and for whom studying will be an unbearable burden.

The teachers were the first who began. They give quite short text to the students, mainly on anatomy for now – the most understandable area of medicine for everyone. Let’s give an example. The text was taken from Wikipedia as a source of the easiest and most understandable texts.

“Human anatomy is the study of the shape and form of the human body. The human body has four limbs (two arms and two legs), a head and a neck, which connect to the torso. The body’s shape is determined by a strong skeleton made of bone and cartilage, surrounded by fat (adipose tissue), muscle, connective tissue, organs, and other structures. The spine at the back of the skeleton contains the flexible vertebral column, which surrounds the spinal cord, which is a collection of nerve fibres connecting the brain to the rest of the body. Nerves connect the spinal cord and brain to the rest of the body. All major bones, muscles, and nerves in the body are named, with the exception of anatomical variations such as sesamoid bones and accessory muscles”.

First of all, in order to translate the text, both the teachers and students had to learn all the words of this small text. The translation into Turkish was carried out by the students under the supervision of the teachers, so the text was translated in the way that teachers are accustomed to translating English texts in various areas of scientific discourse, i.e. verbatim, taking into account some differences between inflectional Turkish and analytical English.

The students confessed that they understood very little, because they perceived this text as separate pieces of information that were practically not connected in any way. When the teachers made an attempt to consider the problem later they understood that the matter was in mentality of two nations – Turkish and English since for the students accustomed to the smooth and even explanatory narration of texts in their native language, an English text without the necessary details explaining the essence of the content is felt quite harsh to them, when the author simply presents facts and does not think about whether it will be understood or not. In addition, they did not immediately realize that the verb (predicate) is not in the usual place for them – at the end of the sentence, but can be in the middle. They had already seen this before in the examples of short sentences, but did not imagine how it looks in specific texts.

The students for the first time asked the faculty council with to allow them to check the translation of the text using a computer translator. The consent was given, since the teachers themselves were interested in solving the problem. The translator presented this version of the translation.

“İnsan anatomisi, insan vücudunun şekli ve biçiminin incelenmesidir. İnsan vücudunda dört uzuv (iki kol ve iki bacak), bir kafa ve gövdeye bağlanan bir boyun bulunur. Vücudun şekli, yağ (yağ dokusu), kas, bağ dokusu, organlar ve diğer yapılarla çevrelenmiş, kemik ve kıkırdaktan oluşan güçlü bir iskelet tarafından belirlenir. İskeletin arkasındaki omurga, beyni vücudun geri kalanına bağlayan sinir lifleri topluluğu olan omuriliği çevreleyen esnek vertebral kolonu içerir. Sinirler omuriliği ve beyni vücudun geri kalanına bağlar. Sesamoid kemikler ve yardımcı kaslar gibi anatomik varyasyonlar dışında vücuttaki tüm önemli kemikler, kaslar ve sinirler adlandırılır”.

But it was the turn for the teachers to be surprised because the translation variant was completely unexpected for them. The matter is that when studying Turkish, the teachers had the advantage of the fact that their native language (Ukrainian) was one of the Slavic languages, which has a very developed system of endings, so the logic of the inflectional type of another language was clear to them. However, this time it was not about the type of language, but about a different type of thinking. For them, accustomed to the analytical structure of English sentences, to the strict word order, to the specific content without details, the translation seemed completely devoid of logic, for example, it included some unnecessary, additional elements that were not present in the English text. For example, why is the neck ‘bir boyun’ separated from ‘bir kafa’ and why is the verb ‘bulunur’ used for the neck, and not the common word for the neck and head ‘bağlanan’, etc. (To the teachers’ mind the cognitive differences between Turkish, English and Ukrainian specialized languages require the further study).

When both parties (students and teachers) came together for a discussion, the emotional state of the students, rejecting everything unfamiliar and alien, was very negative. However, the teachers managed to logically prove the following: 1) the virtual absence of endings in the English language is not a disadvantage, but an undoubted advantage, since students do not need to learn a completely unknown system of endings, which of course creates additional difficulties; 2) an English sentence instead includes a fairly large number of connecting words (prepositions, conjunctions, articles, pronouns, etc.), which connect words in a sentence. According to statistical data from the researchers, these elements (there are about 20 of them) cover 70-78% of any specialized text, i.e. students already know 70-78% of any text in their specialty in advance. Therefore, they should be learned first; 3) the English text implies the inclusion of many lexical elements which describe the facts and that usually remain outside the text, but which are clearly stated in the Turkish text, and this is the main logical difference between the languages (and probably the nations). The English text, as they say, needs to be “thought out”. But this cannot prevent the students from inserting the necessary additions (explanations) themselves when translating, which follows from the Turkish (computer) translation of the English text on anatomy.

It should be noted that, of course, all the explanations were given in Turkish very briefly and perhaps not very correctly, but the main thing is that the students understood the teachers’ idea. (Türkçede kelimeler eklerle birbirine bağlanmıştır, bu nedenle birçok farklı ek bulunur. İngilizce dilinde neredeyse hiç son yoktur (bunlardan sadece üç tane vardır), ancak bir cümledeki kelimeleri birbirine bağlayan ayrı unsurlar vardır; bunlardan çok azı vardır ve iyi tercüme edebilmek için bunların öğrenilmesi gerekir. – In Turkish the words are connected to each other with endings, so there are many different endings. There are almost no endings in the English language (there are only three of them), but there are separate elements that connect words in a sentence; there are very few of them and they must be learned in order to translate well).

The subsequent training process was filled with short but informative texts from the field of medical discourse (practically daily introduction of new texts) and was aimed at a more detailed explanation and subsequent assimilation of the already presented grammar concepts and the general cognitive principle of understanding the context. At first, students simply learned to understand the logic of the English language, which implies, but does not explain the author’s thought in detail with the use of additional linguistic units, which requires some imagination and the ability to rely on logic and the so-called background knowledge of the described subject. In connection with this situation the students had to constantly improve their educational level, especially in the field of general medicine.

The teachers found it useful for the students to deliver something similar to short reports or messages on medical issues on the popular scientific topics, for example, the principle of the spread of COVID, the

statistics of the spread, a comparison of the data obtained in Turkey and Ukraine. At the same time, the teachers had to ask questions in Turkish, for example, Türkiye’de kaç kişi Kovid hastası (how many people are sick with COVID in Turkey), Türkiye’deki istatistikler neden Avrupa ve Amerika’ya göre daha düşük (why are the statistics in Turkey lower than in Europe or America), etc. The students had to learn such messages by heart.

It should be noted that the students treated the teachers much more gently and with more understanding in situations where the teachers could not formulate their questions correctly in Turkish and turned to a computer translator, while they themselves demanded that students under no circumstances could use a translator. Usually, students preferred not to pay attention to such behavior of their “mentors”. When the teachers asked to explain this position, they received a laconic answer that English is more necessary for students than Turkish for teachers.

The psychologists visited classes quite often to monitor how the teachers implemented their recommendations. They specified that the teachers did not clearly and ineptly presented the position that they (the psychologists) had advised to implement i.e. to demonstrate their absolute confidence in the successful acquisition of the necessary knowledge and competencies by the students.

This stage clearly demonstrated which of the students would not be able to continue studying due to the increased workload and demands, and the psychologists were sure that it was the teachers that were largely to blame for this due to their inability to create the necessary psychological support.

The second stage was much shorter – only 2.5 months.

Stage 3. This stage was devoted to the formation of speaking and dialogue skills in students. During stage 2, there were already attempts to form some dialogue field when presenting messages, when the students had to answer the questions after short messages. However, these were still very weak and quite rare attempts to create a dialogue. And here the teachers were surprised by the students’ unexpected proposal to play a kind of “mise-en-scenes” from the students’ lives, for example, prompts in the class, a request to borrow a pen, a request to plug in a laptop during the lesson, etc.

However, taking into account that the main goal of the course was still mastering the competencies used mainly in future studies at the Medical University, in lectures and practical classes, the teachers offered scenes from the professional life of dentists (the majority of the students), for example, giving some medical instrument, washing hands, a dialogue with a patient before treatment, during treatment and after treatment (open your mouth, rinse your mouth, do not close your mouth, you can close your mouth, which tooth hurts), etc. It must be said that the future dentists were sincerely glad that their professional activity is associated with such a limited set of terms.

The main emphasis in language practice this time was on asking questions, since the teachers decided to test the level of all competencies in the form of an exam: listening comprehension, the ability to respond in the form of a question, the ability to write your opinion about what you have heard. And note that all these skills had to be demonstrated on such a complex object as specialized language related to medical discourse. Such a multi-faceted test was possible only in some exact situation – during a lecture course on some medical topic.

The preparation for the planned examination of students’ competencies was as follows. By prior arrangement with the administration of the Medical University, which was keenly interested in the knowledge of foreign students and was willing to accommodate them, several lecturers were sent who taught various subjects at the Medical University: anatomy (which the students studied in sufficient detail), hygiene, and prevention. Only those areas of medicine were selected that, in the opinion of the lecturers, the students would be able to understand. The lectures lasted no more than 15 minutes. During this time, the students had to: 1) understand the content of the lectures to the point that they could ask a question, and each of the students had to ask their own question; 2) the question could be asked either in writing or orally.

Such lectures were to be held for a month. This was the first experience for the students when they met a real medical university professor. Two weeks before the lectures began, the students had to master the grammar material “Interrogative sentences in English”. And again, the teachers had to go the way of comparing this grammar material in English and Turkish, i.e. the languages with completely different principles of constructing speech units.

The topic of the first lecture is as follows: “We study anatomy”. It was not a lecture in the full sense of the word, but simply a type of introduction to anatomical science for beginners. For example, the central part consisted of the following text (unfortunately, the scope of the article does not allow entering the full text, but only a part from which one can get an idea of the level of complexity of the lecture text): “At the practical Anatomy class we study the human body. The principle parts of the human body are the head, the trunk and the limbs (extremities). We speak of the upper extremities (arms) and the lower extremities (legs). The head consists of two parts: the skull which contains the brain, and the face which consists of the forehead, the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the cheeks, the ears and the chin. In the mouth there are gums with teeth, the tongue and the palate. The head is connected with the trunk by the neck. The upper part of the trunk is the chest and the lower one is the abdomen. The principle organs in the chest are the lungs, the heart and the gullet (esophagus). We breathe with the lungs. The heart contracts and makes 60-80 beats per minute. The principle organs in the abdominal cavity are the stomach, the liver, the spleen, the intestine, the kidneys, the gall-bladder and the bladder. The framework of the bones is called the skeleton; it supports the soft parts and protects the organs from injury. The bones are covered with muscles. The upper extremity is connected with the chest by the shoulder. Each arm consists of the upper arm, forearm, elbow, wrist and hand. We have four fingers and a thumb on each hand. The lower extremity (the leg) consists of the hip (the thigh), knee, calf, ankle and foot. The body is covered by the skin”.

Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately because that fact supported the students’ pride) the lecturer’s pronunciation left much to be desired. As we can see, the lecture itself does not contain many complex terms, as the students expected. In addition, they saw that even medical university teachers do not pronounce English words very correctly but quite clearly for understanding. By the end of the lecture, the students were so relaxed that they even began to compose questions in advance. Most students preferred oral questions. It cannot be said that all the questions were asked perfectly correctly; several questions had to be asked 2-3 times for the teacher to understand.

The next lectures were presented in increasing degree of complexity. The lectures on hygiene were especially difficult to understand, since they contained many terms unfamiliar to the students. At the first lecture the students were already unable to ask a single question, even those students whose level of English was quite high. They simply did not understand anything. After these lectures, the teacher of hygiene announced that the students were not ready to study at the medical university, although the students had understood the previous lecture completely.

The discussions began again among the students about the complexity of the English language, and impossibility to learn it (Bu dili ne kadar sürede öğrenebilirsiniz – How long should we learn this language). The teachers asked them to hold a student conference that was organized after the lectures. They tried to explain that even in Turkish, which is the students’ native language, they do not know many words, especially medical terms, that it is not the English language that is difficult, but medicine itself is a very complex science (Dilinizi biliyor musunuz? - Ne tür bir soru elbette senden daha iyi biliyorum. – O zaman bana mikroorganizmaların ne olduğunu söyle. - Tıbbi bir şey “Do you know your native language? – What kind of question, of course I know it and better than you. – Then tell me what microorganisms are. – Maybe something medical”). They offered the students first to learn the Turkish terms on hygiene from at least several areas of this science which is very popular and of current interest at present: Toplum sağlığı; Sağlık etki değerlendirmesi; Sağlık sistemi; Bebek ölümü; Bulaşıcı ve epidemik hastalıkların önlenmesi; Cinsel yolla bulaşan hastalık; Aşı çalışmaları; tropikal hastalıklar; Enfeksiyon hastalıkları; Salgın (Epidemi); Pandemi; Surveyans; Karantina; Gıda hijyeni ve sertifikasyon sistemleri; Gıda güvenliği; Gıda katkısı; Gıda işleme; Sağlık davranışları; rasyonel davranış modeli.

Only at this stage the students clearly understood the following: 1) their educational level is too low for the medical university and first of all they need to improve their general knowledge; 2) English is as difficult as any other foreign language, and the matter is not in the language, but in them themselves; 3) emotional attitude plays a very big role in studying (and maybe not only in studying), i.e. if you have a firm belief and confidence that you can learn (or do) something, then you will learn it, if not, nothing will help you; 4) nothing matters if you decide to do something, and if you decide, then do it.

We would not like to comment all these decisions, because they clearly demonstrate that our work was basically done. And it is not only the knowledge of English, it is the general attitude, determination.

As a result, the teachers promised the students to negotiate with the medical university about continuing the lectures.

This concluded the English language course for the Turkish students-future doctors.

Conclusions

Based on the above, we could make the following conclusions and recommendations.

The method of breaking down the opposition 'teacher – students' has shown that it is quite effective. Of course, with such a methodological approach the teachers are forced to make the definite time and psychological sacrifices. However, such a practice of teaching English to foreign students shows that requirements for students without strict requirements for teachers cannot give positive results. That is, if students see and understand that both teachers and students experience the same difficulties, then the effectiveness of training will be much higher. Moreover, teachers and students form a single community the members of which understand and support each other.

Permission to use any (including computer) means that enable the students to ease their position and weaken the sense of responsibility for their actions inevitably leads to a negative result in language acquisition in our case, and to a negative result in any other matter.

To recommend that psychologists are involved in the training process without fail, who could give their professional recommendations for any psychologically dangerous situation.

To pay attention to the students' emotional state, which is one of the most necessary components of the educational process; constantly maintain a level of calm confidence in the ability to do now everything which yesterday seemed impossible and even incredible.

In terms of achieving the competencies that were declared in the program, a very gradual transition from simple to complex material is required; in the linguistic aspect to make a constant comparison between the students' native language and the language that is the object of study.

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