



FROM MEDICAL ENGLISH NEEDS TO CLINICAL COMMUNICATION: DESIGNING A PROBLEM-BASED ESP COURSE FOR NEUROLOGY STUDENTS

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Zangiota tuman ixtisoslashgan maktab ingliz tili fani o‘qituvchisi

Abstract. Medical students need English for different purposes during their education and future work. They may need to read research articles and clinical guidelines, discuss cases with colleagues, and explain medical information to patients. General English lessons, however, do not always give students enough practice for these situations. This paper presents a proposed Problem-Based Learning (PBL) course for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) designed for third-year neurology students at B2 level. The course is based on learners’ professional needs and focuses on patient communication, simple explanations of medical terms, medical listening, and reading authentic materials. Case studies, videos, infographics, role-plays, and problem-based tasks are used to connect language learning with neurology. A seizure-management situation is used as the main PBL example, and Parkinson’s disease is used as a sample lesson. The paper presents a course-design framework rather than measured learning results. Therefore, the proposed course still needs to be implemented and evaluated with real learners.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes; Medical English; neurology students; Problem-Based Learning; needs analysis; clinical communication.
Ключевые слова: английский язык для специальных целей; медицинский английский; студенты-неврологи; проблемно-ориентированное обучение; анализ потребностей; клиническая коммуникация.

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Аннотация. Медицинским студентам английский язык необходим для различных целей в процессе обучения и будущей профессиональной деятельности. Им может потребоваться читать научные статьи и клинические рекомендации, обсуждать клинические случаи с коллегами и объяснять медицинскую информацию пациентам. Однако занятия по общему английскому языку не всегда предоставляют достаточно возможностей для практики в подобных ситуациях. В данной статье представлен проект курса английского языка для специальных целей (ESP), основанного на проблемно-ориентированном обучении (PBL), для студентов третьего курса неврологии с уровнем английского языка B2. Курс разработан с учётом профессиональных потребностей учащихся и направлен на развитие навыков общения

с пациентами, простого объяснения медицинских терминов, медицинского аудирования и чтения аутентичных материалов. Для связи изучения языка с неврологией используются клинические случаи, видеоматериалы, инфографика, ролевые игры и проблемно-ориентированные задания. В качестве основного примера PBL рассматривается ситуация, связанная с ведением пациента с судорогами, а болезнь Паркинсона используется в качестве примера учебного занятия. Статья представляет модель разработки курса, а не результаты измерения эффективности обучения. Поэтому предложенный курс ещё необходимо реализовать и оценить на практике с участием реальных учащихся.

Ключевые слова: английский язык для специальных целей; медицинский английский; студенты-неврологи; проблемно-ориентированное обучение; анализ потребностей; клиническая коммуникация.

Annotatsiya. Tibbiyot talabalari ingliz tilidan ta’lim olish jarayonida va kelajakdagi kasbiy faoliyatida turli maqsadlarda foydalanadilar. Ularga ilmiy maqolalar va klinik tavsiyalarni o‘qish, hamkasblari bilan klinik holatlarni muhokama qilish hamda tibbiy ma’lumotlarni bemorlarga tushunarli tarzda tushuntirish zarur bo‘lishi mumkin. Biroq umumiy ingliz tili darslari bunday vaziyatlarda amaliyot qilish uchun har doim ham yetarli imkoniyat bermaydi. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini B2 darajasida biladigan uchinchi bosqich nevrologiya talabalari uchun muammoga asoslangan ta’lim (PBL) asosidagi maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili (ESP) kursi loyihasi taqdim etilgan. Kurs talabalarning kasbiy ehtiyojlari asosida ishlab chiqilgan bo‘lib, bemorlar bilan muloqot qilish, tibbiy atamalarni sodda tilda tushuntirish, tibbiy tinglab tushunish va autentik materiallarni o‘qish ko‘nikmalariga e’tibor qaratadi. Ingliz tilini nevrologiya bilan bog‘lash maqsadida klinik holatlar, videolar, infografikalar, rolli o‘yinlar va muammoga asoslangan topshiriqlardan foydalaniladi. PBL uchun asosiy misol sifatida tutqanoq holatini boshqarish bilan bog‘liq vaziyat, namunaviy dars sifatida esa Parkinson kasalligi tanlangan. Maqolada kursni ishlab chiqish modeli taqdim etilgan bo‘lib, o‘quv natijalari bo‘yicha o‘lchangan empirik ma’lumotlar keltirilmagan. Shu sababli taklif etilgan kursni real o‘quvchilar bilan amaliyotga joriy etish va uning samaradorligini baholash zarur.

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Introduction English is now an important part of medical education. A large amount of current medical knowledge is available in English, so medical students often need to work with research articles, case studies, clinical guidelines, and other professional materials. This is especially important for neurology students because many professional resources and new research in neurology are published in English. At the same time, knowing general English does not always mean that a student can communicate well in a clinical setting. For example, a student may know the word “tremor” but may not know how to explain it to a patient who has never studied medicine. In the same way, students may know grammar rules and medical vocabulary but still have difficulty listening to patients, asking suitable questions, or explaining information in clear and simple language. These needs are connected with the

main idea of English for Specific Purposes. Belcher (2006) explains that ESP should consider learners' current needs as well as the professional situations they may face in the future. For this reason, needs analysis is an important step when developing a specialized English course. It helps teachers understand what learners need to do with English in their academic and professional lives (Serafini et al., 2015). Problem-Based Learning can make this connection more practical. Instead of studying medical vocabulary only as separate lists, students can work with realistic problems. They have to understand information, discuss it, ask questions, and find an appropriate way to respond. This paper therefore proposes a PBL-based Medical English course for third-year neurology students and shows how language practice and professional content can be combined in one course.

Literature Review

ESP course design should start with a clear understanding of learners and the situations in which they will use English. Belcher (2006) points out that ESP should be related to learners' academic and professional futures. Serafini et al. (2015) also emphasize the importance of systematic needs analysis when working with specialized groups. In Medical English, this means that a course should not focus only on medical words. It should also consider the communication tasks students are likely to perform. Medical students may need to speak with patients, discuss cases with colleagues, understand professional texts, and explain difficult information to people who do not have a medical background. Rinawati et al. (2022) similarly show the importance of connecting English for Medical Purposes with students' specific needs rather than simply following a general English syllabus. PBL is useful for this type of learning because it gives students a clear reason to use language. A problem or case can create a situation in which students need to read, listen, speak, and use new vocabulary at the same time. Medical cases are particularly suitable because they are close to the situations that students may meet in their future work. Woodrow (2018) also provides a useful basis for specialized ESP course design. Her work shows the value of combining language development with subject knowledge and practical professional tasks. Following this idea, the proposed course does not separate English from neurology. Neurological topics provide the context in which students practice English for real professional purposes.

Methodology and Course Design

The proposed course is intended for third-year neurology students who are approximately 23–24 years old and have a B2 level of English. They are expected to have about three years of previous English study. At this stage, students already know basic grammar and can use tenses to describe symptoms. They can also take part in everyday conversations and have basic medical vocabulary related to illnesses, symptoms, and treatment. However, their professional needs are more specific. They need to communicate with patients and their families, explain medical terms in simple language, understand different ways of describing symptoms, and work with authentic medical materials. For example, students need to understand that “tremor” can be explained to a patient as “shaking” and “bradykinesia” as “slow movement.” They also need practice with different accents and ways of speaking because real patients may not sound like textbook speakers.

The course design is based on a planned needs-analysis process using several sources. Students can complete questionnaires about their language difficulties, professional goals, and areas where they need more practice. A university director can provide institutional information through an interview, including expectations for students’ professional development and possible cooperation with healthcare institutions. Observation by a neuroscience educator can add information about students’ participation, strengths, and support needs. Using several sources makes the needs analysis broader than relying only on students’ opinions. Based on these needs, the course has three main objectives. First, students should be able to explain neurological conditions and medical terms in patient-friendly English. Second, they should communicate clearly and empathetically with patients and their families. Third, they should be able to explain basic medical information and procedures to people without a medical background.

Course Structure and Learning Activities

The course follows a modular structure. Each unit combines a neurological topic, professional vocabulary, authentic or adapted materials, and communication activities. New vocabulary is not taught only as a list of definitions. Students use the words in cases, discussions, explanations, and role-plays. This gives them repeated practice and helps them see how medical language is used in communication. A central problem in the course is a patient who has experienced seizures. The patient and family are worried because they do not understand possible triggers, what they should do during a seizure, or how rescue medication is connected with the management plan. Students take the role of healthcare professionals who have to explain the situation clearly and appropriately. At the beginning of the task, students work with a short video, an infographic, a glossary, and a sample dialogue. These materials introduce the main information and vocabulary. Students then identify what the patient and family need to know. They discuss how the information can be expressed in simple English rather than using only specialist terminology. Finally, they take part in a doctor–patient or doctor–family role-play. During the role-play, they listen to questions, give answers, explain information, and try to communicate in a supportive way. This activity develops several language skills together. Students use listening skills when they hear the patient’s concerns, vocabulary when they discuss the medical problem, and speaking skills when they explain the situation. They also practice interactional language because they need to respond to questions and keep the conversation clear. At the same time, the task is connected with a professional situation that may be relevant to their future work. A similar approach can be used for other neurological conditions. Parkinson’s disease, for example, can be used as a lesson topic. Students can learn terms such as tremor, rigidity, bradykinesia, and dopamine. After learning the basic meaning of the terms, they practice changing technical explanations into language that patients and family members can understand. They can read a short case, identify symptoms, discuss the case, and complete a role-play in which one student explains the condition while another acts as a family member. Authentic materials are another important part of the course. Medical videos, case studies, articles, guidelines, infographics, and sample dialogues can show students the kind of language they may meet outside the classroom. Some authentic materials may be difficult for

B2 learners, so teachers can adapt the language while keeping the main professional information. In this way, students receive realistic input without being given material that is unnecessarily difficult.

Assessment and Discussion

Assessment in the proposed course is directly connected with the course objectives. Formative assessment can include doctor–patient role-plays. In these activities, students can be assessed on the clarity of their speech, appropriate use of medical vocabulary, ability to give patient-friendly explanations, listening, and professional communication. Case-study presentations can show whether students understand medical information and can explain it orally. A final written patient report can assess their ability to organize and communicate information about a neurological case. The main purpose of this assessment approach is to see whether students can actually use English for professional communication. Grammar and medical terminology remain important, but they are not the only things that matter. If the aim of a course is to prepare students for communication with patients, assessment should give students a chance to demonstrate this communication. The proposed course also gives more attention to patient-friendly language. Medical students usually learn a large amount of technical terminology, but future healthcare professionals need to move between specialist language and everyday language. A doctor may understand a technical term easily, while a patient may not. Therefore, students need practice in changing complex medical information into clear explanations. This can help them communicate more effectively with patients and their families. PBL gives students a meaningful reason to use English. Instead of simply memorizing words connected with seizures or Parkinson’s disease, students receive a communication problem that they have to solve. They must decide what information is important, how to explain it, and how to respond to questions. This makes language practice more closely connected with their future professional role. There are, however, some limitations to the proposed course. The paper describes a course framework and a planned needs-analysis process rather than completed experimental research. The course has not yet been implemented with real learners, so there are no empirical results to show its effectiveness. For this reason, the paper does not claim that the course will definitely improve students’ clinical communication skills. Future research should collect questionnaire and interview data from students and other relevant participants. Classroom observation can also be used to examine students’ participation and communication. In addition, students’ clinical communication skills could be assessed before and after the course. Such data would make it possible to evaluate the course more carefully and make changes based on actual learner performance. Overall, the proposed design shows how Medical English can be connected with professional tasks. The combination of needs analysis, PBL, authentic materials, and communication activities gives students opportunities to use English in situations that are closer to their future work. The focus is not only on knowing medical English but also on using it in a clear and understandable way.

Conclusion

This paper proposed a needs-based Problem-Based Learning ESP course for third-year neurology students. The course responds to several important needs, including patient communication, patient-friendly explanations, medical listening, specialized vocabulary, and reading professional materials. Its main idea is to connect English learning with the professional situations that students are preparing to enter. The seizure-management scenario and the Parkinson’s disease lesson show how neurological content can create a useful context for language learning. Through cases, authentic materials, discussions, and role-plays, students can practice not only medical terminology but also the communication skills needed to explain information to patients and families. The proposed model should be understood as a course-design framework that still needs implementation and evaluation. Real needs-analysis data and learner performance data would help researchers examine how useful the approach is and what parts of the course should be improved. The same framework could also be adapted for other medical specialties where students need to combine professional knowledge with clear English communication.

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