Sharipova F.I.

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

Tashkent pediatric medical institute

This study is an analysis of the educational curriculum of teaching English language in medical high schools**.** In the beginning of 21st century, English has become as integral part of educational curriculum in the medical high schools in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Generally speaking, the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the Republic of Uzbekistan has get high levels. But there are still some problems and different local specificities that involved in this process. The researcher **in the aim makes a contrastive view** of the possibly existing problems of teaching English in the medical institutes to elicit possible factors and to suggests that learning problems provided to students are influenced by a teacher's short-term pedagogical experience, his or her evolving more theoretical than practical approach, routinized behaviors.

Materials and methods

The research questions, concerning problems of teaching English language in medical high schools, data collection and analysis are such methods and material of the given study.

Results

After discussing these various problems the researcher proposes that teachers and medical students need to interact to construct better-informed understandings for diminishing the above mentioned problems.

Introduction

The classroom, is a scene where teachers as instructors, that transmitting knowledge on English language to students, as learners. In the field of English language instruction, we have been slow to recognize that teaching needs to be examined and understood on its own terms. Teacher education, curriculum development, program design, education standards implicitly held views of what teaching is and how should be done. To date, however there has been no organized research or study of the conception of teaching which undergird the field of medicine and influence on teaching English language in medical high schools. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task in the medical institutes in general and in our institute (Tashkent Medical Pediatric Institute) in particular. English has been included in the curriculum of medical institutes and considerable attention has been paid to this language in our society for the following reasons: first of all, access to and use of the latest medical and scientific resources mainly written in English that requires for an efficient level of English language proficiency. Secondly, coping with the demands of the era of information explosion and the efficient use of the Internet makes learning English as a necessity. Thirdly, mastery of English facilitates in searching medical vacancies including the proposal of the work in abroad. In spite of all these, some studies show that teaching and learning English in medical high schools has not been able to satisfy the specified goals. Thus, due to the shortcomings of curriculum the at medical high schools to fulfill the professional needs of the students on the one hand, and the need for learning English to satisfy these communicative needs on the other hand, the modulations and changes have been developed throughout the last years. The foreign researchers Zheng JY, Zhao JX, Zhao QC, Wu GS, Dou KF, Tuo J. (2105)'s paper displays the need to reassess the approaches used to teach English language in the medical institute. English as a compulsory course is being taught at the TashPMI, starting from the first courses in almost all faculties it continues for three years years. In spite of studying English for a long period of time in the TashPMI (almost 3 years), students are not able to communicate in English in the real contexts. The researched data displayed that medical students after nearly three years of education neither are enabled to speak fluently in English language nor interact with other people because of emphasis on grammatical structure. So, it is really necessary to explore real reasons behind the poor achievements of the students in English. To do so, **this study aimed** at eliciting and classifying the related factors in this regard. This is achieved by scrutinizing the available studies dealing with the problems of language teaching in the medical institute. It is also an attempt to highlight what can be done to improve the situation significantly.

Materials and methods

It is important to identify the problems the medical students encounter in the process of learning English. The main obstacle for learning English is that there is no environment that makes them familiar with the original language. In other words, there is no active role for English outside the classroom. So, they do not feel the immediate need to learn English. And the educational system should bring about such need. The significant role of the English language as the lingua franca of today's world in establishing foreign relations is simply neglected in the medical institute. Very few learners and /or teachers travel to English speaking countries or have contact with English speakers. A few native English speakers are visited the medical institute with short-term courses. We can see only a few English speaking foreigners in the country as invited medical students by exchange or tourists. Moreover, the places you may find the tourists are limited to tourist sites, hotels, or business companies. This can be explained in a study carried out in the Tashkent Pediatrician Medical Institute, in which the existing problems of teaching and learning English as a foreign/ second language in the medical high schools in Uzbekistan were identified. The results indicated that lingual students had better access to English audio-visual aids (e.g., listening or watching English TV news or programs), they read English newspapers and magazines more than five times as compared to the medical students and majority of them find the contents of their English textbooks interesting. It should be noted that a number of English textbooks/journals is much higher than in the medical institute. The extent of speaking English in their English classes was higher than the medical institutes. Moreover, poor English knowledge of the medical students may further discourage them to read English medical textbooks/journals.

Furthermore, there are a lot of medical students who look for ways of improving their English, but they do not know how and where to start. In most of the English classes, little attention is paid to the conscious efforts learners make in mastering a foreign language. Many of students do not know, neglect or pay not enough attention to how to deal with the task of learning a foreign language even after years of study; only a few students who have used a set of strategies, have been able to succeed and hence, learn the language. It is a neglected area in our language classes. Teachers should be concerned with helping students to learn how to learn the ways of effective learning of English as a foreign language and to achieve autonomy in their education. It has been argued that learning how to learn (self-directed learning) would be of utmost importance for medical students for at least three reasons. First, because of the complexity of the task which learning presents, there is never enough time within a formal scheme of instruction to ensure mastery on the part of students, and if the student has not been prepared within the classroom to take responsibility to learn autonomously outside, it is unlikely that any learning will take place (Carver & Dickinson, 1982; Dickinson & Carver, 1980). The second reason is the belief that engaging students in the process of learning and assessment would encourage their learning efficiency. Studies of the characteristics of good language learners (Naiman, et al. 1978; Stern, 1983) suggest that efficient learners consciously monitor their performances, analyze them, and develop a repertoire of efficient learning strategies. Thirdly, in a self-directed scheme, through reducing the distance between the student and the teacher, feelings of anxiety, frustration, and alienation decrease, and consequently the student becomes more receptive to the learning process (Brown, 1973; Schumann, 1975). Another challenging factor is students' beliefs about the nature of learning English as a subject consisting of a list of words and a set of grammatical rules which are to be memorized and separable skills to be acquired rather than a set of integrated skills and subskills (Oxford, 2001). Furthermore, the students in English classes do not have common background knowledge because some of them are trained in rural areas in which un-qualified English teachers teach them while other students are taught in urban areas having access to a lot of classroom facilities to gain advantage of. While some of the students take advantage of using satellite programs, VCD and video tapes, and go to private language schools, most of the students just have their textbooks as the only source of learning English. Under such circumstances, there is no placement test to put students into different groups homogeneously based on their language proficiency levels. This makes the situation even much worse for the weak

students and they resort to guide books. As classes are crowded, most of the students do not have enough practice in English and do not overcome language learning problems and are not proficient enough to communicate in the foreign language. Because in the limited hours of instruction, they normally could not have the chance of learning English especially the most favored skills of listening and speaking. There is no place for group work discussion. To acquire the target language effectively, learners need to engage actively in processing the meanings of whatever they hear and read. Group work in the educational context generally involves a small number of students working together to achieve a task (Amatobi & Amatobi, 2013; Dooly, 2008).

The results and discussion

Not all students have the same motivation or purpose for learning English. Some of them look at English just as a course that should be passed and do not understand its importance as a means of communication with which they can adapt themselves to new improvements in medicine and other sciences. For most learners, learning English is a duty — something that they have to, but don't want to do. They don't see pleasure in learning English. These students have low motivation to participate in class, and they simply try to get a passing mark to get rid of the course. Other students attend the classes to learn some special points to be successful in the getting high-salary vacancy so they pay attention to special parts of the book. To be successful in this kind of interview, only a good grasp of vocabulary, some grammatical points, and reading comprehension are sufficient, so the students pay little attention to speaking, listening and writing skills. Another demotivating factor is that English is considered as a general subject compared to special subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics and biology. In the university entrance exam, the scores for special subjects outweigh those for general ones. So, students spend more time on studying their special subjects than general ones.

Conclusion

One of the major problems of language learning in the medical institute is that most of our students do not have the capacity to express themselves in the foreign language fluently after studying English at schools for several years. In other words, they cannot communicate in English. The researcher tried to examine the reasons behind the failures of the medical students to acquire the expected level of proficiency in English in spite of learning English for three successive years. The problems fall into seven categories which constitute five important components of any education system (students, teachers, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation) which are closely interrelated. Knowing about the students' needs is one critical matter for the teachers to teach and authors to write textbooks. Most of students in the medical institute tend to participate in communicative activities type to learn English. Some students tend to have more opportunities to participate in free conversation classes, expressing their wish towards a more communicatively oriented approach. On the other hand, there are those who prefer more emphasis on grammar teaching and learning (Bada and Okan, 2000). Thus, the syllabuses should be observed based on all students' requirements and interests.

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