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PECULIARITIES OF IMPLEMENTING AN INTENSIVE ENGLISH COURSE TO MEDICAL TEACHING STAFF

The article deals with the planning, creation and implementing the intensive English course to medical teaching staff. The given article investigates needs assessment of the learners. The detailed descriptions for 'four skills' are defined. The course outline is described. It also examines learners' feedback, and suggests some recommendations, which seem most suitable in the light of the above theoretical considerations.

Key words: medical teaching staff, ascertaining language proficiency, peculiarities of teaching and learning processes, needs assessment, objectives of learning context CEFR scale and descriptors.

Стаття присвячена плануванню, створенню та впровадженню інтенсивного курсу англійської мови для викладацького складу медичної сфери. Дана стаття досліджує оцінку потреб навчаючих. Наведений детальний перелік навичок у чотирьох видах мовленнєвої діяльності. Надано схему розробленого курсу. Дана стаття також вивчає відгуки відвідувачів курсів і пропонує деякі рекомендації, які здаються найбільш придатними з огляду на вищезазначені теоретичні міркування.

Ключові слова: викладацький склад медичної сфери, підтвердження рівня володіння мовою, особливості процесу навчання, оцінка потреб, цілі контексту навчання, шкала CEFR та дескриптори.

Статья посвящена планированию, созданию и внедрению интенсивного курса английского языка для преподавательского состава медицинской сферы. Данная статья исследует оценку потребностей обучающих. Приведенный подробный перечень навыков в четырех видах речевой деятельности. Предоставлено схему разработанного курса. Данная статья также изучает отзывы посетителей курсов и предлагает некоторые рекомендации, которые кажутся наиболее подходящими учитывая вышеуказанные теоретические рассуждения.

Ключевые слова: преподавательский состав медицинской сферы, подтверждение уровня владения языком, особенности процесса обучения, оценка

потребностей, цели контекста обучения, шкала CEFR и дескрипторы.

English is now recognized as a basic life skill for the 21st century, like using a computer, rather than specialists' accomplishments. It provides people with the ability to explore and navigate wider ranges of information and viewpoints. The situation in Ukraine, where English is not the mother tongue of the majority of the population and has no formal administrative role, is challenging. According to survey results, published by British Council, English language proficiency in Ukraine is low and remains close to the very bottom of the ranking [1, p.31]. Obviously, Ukrainian education today does not meet contemporary needs of the individual, and does not follow global trends.

That is why a systemic transformation of education system has started with the main goal of achieving a new quality of education at all levels. The Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine has set a number of reform priorities for Ukraine's education system, improving both teachers' and students' levels of English in the higher education sector as a priority.

Higher education institutions have to achieve transformational and sustainable change in the quality of teaching and learning of English so that university teaching staff will be able to fully participate in international exchange and collaboration, and students can graduate with more employable skills and greater ability to enter the career path. It can help put an end to isolation and stagnation in the area of research, create demand for high quality development in fundamental and applied sciences, bridge the gap between research and the implementation of its results, and integrate higher education and science of Ukraine into the education and research space of the European Union.

While the Ministry of Education and Science has set the English language benchmark for all non-linguistic university teachers at CEFR B2 [1; 2], Poltava State Medical University has responded to this increased demand for achieving sustainable development and support in levels of English among teaching staff as a priority. Taking into consideration the high level of student recruitment from overseas and conducting classes in English, ascertaining language proficiency was vitally important.

In the given article, we discuss the planning, creation and execution of an intensive English course for medical teaching staff. The aim is to examine the process of setting up the course, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and consider the possibility for its further improvement.

The previous educational experiences and the level of English vary considerably within this target group, as will factors such as motivation, application and aptitude. As for any group of learners, intensive English language course will need to take into account the particular needs of medical teaching staff and plan to deliver high quality outline accordingly.

Needs assessment is a process that can help learners at all levels successfully identify, understand, and better address education challenges. Many scientists generally define needs assessment as a systematic examination of the gap that exists between the current state and desired state of learners [4, p.25-35; 3].

Before implementing a meaningful and purposeful course to medical teaching staff, needs assessment and language teaching/learning context was identified according to CEFR. A language teaching/learning context had its own specific aims and objectives [3]. Objectives break down a high-level aim into smaller units of learning, providing a basis for organising teaching and describing learning outcomes in terms of performance. There are different kinds of objective. For example, with respect to the aim 'Learners will learn to listen critically to radio and TV' the following kinds of objective can be defined:

language objectives (learn vocabulary of specific news topic areas, distinguish fact and opinion in newspaper articles); language-learning objectives (infer meaning of unknown words from context); non-language objectives (confidence, motivation, cultural enrichment); process objectives, i.e. with a focus on developing knowledge, attitudes and skills which learners need (investigation, reflection, discussion, interpretation, cooperation).

Languages are generally taught and assessed in terms of the 'four skills': listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We have defined the following descriptors in 'four skills'. The detailed descriptions below are intended to capture the notion that gradual development of teachers' expertise over time involves growing understanding of teaching and learning, growing aware of strengths, weaknesses and potential as a teacher, increasing sophistication in planning, decision-making, teaching skills and reflection, as well as the ability to respond to a more complex range of classroom situations.

In academic reading, a learner can:

- obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly-specialized sources;
- read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively;
- have a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms;
- identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.

In academic writing, a learner can:

- write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail;
- evaluate ideas or solutions to a problem;
- synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources;
- •write letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views.

In academic listening, a learner can:

- understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life:
- understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect;
- understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed;
- understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content:
- understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in standard dialect and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.

In academic speaking, a learner can:

• give a clear, prepared presentation, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and giving the advantages and disadvantages of various

options;

- take a series of follow-up questions with a degree of fluency and spontaneity which poses no strain for either him/herself or the audience;
- use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas;
- communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances;
- highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments;
- take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.

After establishing what learners need to learn, it is important to plan so that the course reflects those needs. Medical teaching staff often expects courses to be planned carefully because they work in a world where planning and accountability are taken for granted. Using a course outline, as explained below in the *Table*, makes this quite manageable in practical terms.

Table English course outline

$\mathcal{N}\!\underline{o}$	Weekdays	Focus	Activity /Format
		areas	
1	Mon.	Grammar	Sentence completion/3-option multiple choice
		Vocabulary	Word matching – similar or opposite meaning/sets of 5
			target words with 10 options
			Sentence completion/3-option multiple choice
			Word pairs or word combinations /sets of 5 target
			words with 10 options
2	Wed.	Reading	Sentence comprehension – choosing words to complete
			sentences/3-option multiple choice
			Text cohesion – putting sentences into the correct
			order/2 tasks: 6 sentences jumbled up in each task
			Opinion matching – matching people's opinions to
			statements/7 statements matched to 4 people's opinions
			Long text comprehension – matching headings to
			paragraphs/7 paragraphs and 8 headings
		Listening	Information recognition – listening to a short
			monologue or dialogue to identify specific
			information/3-option multiple choice
			Information matching – matching people's monologues
			to information/6 pieces of information 4 monologues
			Inference – listening to monologues and dialogues and
			identify the attitude, opinion or intention/3-option
			multiple choice
3	Fri.	Writing	Word-level writing – responding to messages using
			individual words/1-5 words for each question
			Short text writing – writing personal information/20-30

	words Three written responses to questions — responding to written questions on a social network-type website/30-40 words for each question Formal and informal writing — writing an informal email to a friend and a formal email to an unknown person/40-50 words for the informal email 120-150 words for the formal email
Speaking	Personal information — responding to three personal information questions/30 seconds for each response Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanations — describing a picture and answering two additional questions of increasing difficulty/45 seconds for each response Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations — describing two contrasting pictures and answering two additional questions of increasing difficulty/45 seconds for each response Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic — answering three questions on an abstract topic/1 minute to prepare 2 minutes response time

The given outline is realistic and available in written form to both learners and educators. Carefully planning a course in advance has many advantages. Firstly, educators will not need to constantly worry about how balanced and appropriate the course materials and focus areas are. Secondly, learners will have a good idea of when the course is going and will feel reassured that they get an outline that has designed to fit their needs.

Having established the length of course, dates and outline of the course, more detailed planning was made later, involving the creation of materials. A key aspect of planning was how to make the course productive and competitive.

To confirm the chosen direction in training and selecting course materials, we contacted the British Council for taking an international exam Aptis. It has been a reliable tool that has been used as an assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities after taking an intensive English course. It has provided accurate results that meet the international standard of CEFR.

At the end of the course, learners were asked to answer a feedback questionnaire. Ten of the questions required learners to choose one of four options (*very motivated*, *motivated*, *not so motivated*, *not motivated*), two of the options being negative responses and two being positive responses. A four-point scale was used because it had no neutral point, and so learners were required to make a decision on whether they judge an item positively or negatively. In terms of a collective response to the course based on averages, students' responses to it were positive. Over 87% of the learners thought that the intensive course was a good way to study English and their English had improved. Learners who found the content useful were 75%.

We have described the course as an experimental one, because it needs improving and requires far more preparation than the normal general English course. However, a number of benefits emerged from teaching the course intensively. Learners' attendance was consistently very high and their focus was generally strong. Feedback from the

learners and their results passing Aptis test indicates that the course can be viewed positively.

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ФІЛОСОФСЬКІ ПАРАДОКСИ VS ПАРАДОКСИ МОВИ

The phenomena of knowledge acquisition and the process of learning have been discussed and studied for centuries, since ancient times. Most important points of view on the issue were expressed by Greek philosophers who considered the learning processes as a certain motion from imperfect to more perfect. The article makes an attempt the studying the process of learning on the basis of learning the second language. In general there are two approaches to linguistic theorizing (externalism and essentialism) which originate in ancient times. The article argues that the phenomenon of language possesses a paradoxical nature that seems not to be unambiguously explained by behavioristic theories.

Key words: knowledge acquisition, process of learning, learning the second language, externalism, essentialism, paradoxical nature, behavioristic theories.

Явище засвоєння мови та процес навчання обговорюється і вивчається століттями ще з античних часів. Найважливіші погляди на це питання були представлені грецькими філософами, які вважали процес вивчення певним рухом від недосконалого до досконалішого. У статті робиться спроба дослідити процес вивчення, на основі вивчення другої мови. Загалом існують два підходи до лінгвістичного теоретизування (екстерналізм та есенціалізм), що беруть свій початок в час античности. У статті стверджується факт того, що явище мови має парадоксальну природу, яка, як видається, однозначно пояснюється біхейвіористичними теоріями.

Ключові слова: засвоєння мови, процес вивчення, вивчення другої мови, екстерналізм, есенціалізм, парадоксальність природи, біхейвіоричтичні теорії.

Проблема засвоєння знань обговорюється, починаючи з античних часів (близько 2500 років), однак досі відсутні чіткі та однозначні визначення цього процесу. Саме поняття засвоєння, на противагу процесу вивчення, загалом визнається як відносно несвідомий процес здобуття мовних навичок, у той час як вивчення трактується радше як свідомий процес опанування другої мови [9, с. 132]. Виходячи з цього факту, з'явилась низка досліджень, метою яких було виявити і