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MEDICAL ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: PATIENT EXPERIENCES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

The present research is a mixed method study aimed at exploring the current state of the usage of English as a Lingua Franca in the Kazakhstani healthcare settings and international advancements in teaching English for medical purposes. To reach this goal we employed both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (systematic review) research methods. An anonymous self-administered survey was conducted among potential English-speaking patients currently studying or residing in Kazakhstan (n = 44). It was revealed that a significant number of patients commonly visited hospitals for minor illnesses (e.g., cold, flu), routine check-ups, and obtaining medical certificates, but many of them experienced unclear communication. In the systematic review conducted according to PRISMA guidelines, 12 articles were selected for final analysis, revealing effective teaching innovations in teaching English to medical students that improve language skills and academic performance. Namely, several trends were identified across reviewed studies such as technology-enhanced learning (microblogging-based instruction, metaverse environments, blended teaching), collaborative and peer-assisted learning (peer-feedback, involving international students in peer-teaching) and various interactive and engaging methods. The findings of this study can assist Kazakhstani educators and methodologists in staying updated with teaching innovations implemented by international counterparts. This knowledge can be used to integrate effective practices into English teaching syllabuses for medical students. Understanding patients' experiences can enhance teachers' awareness of the communication challenges faced by English-speaking patients in healthcare settings and the most common scenarios in doctor-patient communication. This awareness can facilitate teachers in tailoring their instructions to better prepare medical students for real-world communication in healthcare contexts.

Key words: English for special purposes, MELF, medical students, doctor-patient communication.

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Лингва франка ретіндегі медициналық ағылшын тілі: пациенттердің тәжірибесі және оқыту стратегиялары

Осы зерттеу қазақстандық медициналық мекемелерде ағылшын тілін лингва франка ретінде қолданудың ағымдағы жай-күйін және медициналық мақсаттар үшін ағылшын тілін оқыту саласындағы халықаралық жетістіктерді зерттеуге бағытталған аралас әдістерді пайдалана отырып жүргізілген зерттеу болып табылады. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін біз сандық (сауалнама) және сапалық (жүйелі шолу) зерттеу әдістерін қолдандық. Қазіргі уақытта Қазақстанда оқитын немесе тұратын ағылшын тілінде сөйлейтін пациенттердің арасында (n = 44) анонимді сауалнама жүргізілді. Пациенттердің едәуір бөлігі ауруханаларға жеңіл ауруларды (мысалы, суық тию, тұмау), жоспарлы тексерулерді және медициналық анықтамаларды алу үшін жиі баратыны анықталды, бірақ олардың көпшілігі қарым-қатынаста қиындықтарға тап болады. PRISMA ұсынымдарына сәйкес жүргізілген жүйелі шолу барысында медициналық студенттердің ағылшын тілін оқытудағы тілдік дағдылар мен оқу үлгерімін жақсартатын, тиімді педагогикалық инновацияларды анықтауға мүмкіндік беретін, 12 мақала таңдалды. Атап айтқанда, қарастырылған зерттеулерде бірнеше тенденциялар анықталды, мысалы, технологияны қолдану арқылы оқыту (микроблогтар, мета-ғалам, аралас оқыту), құрдастармен бірлескен оқыту (құрдастарымен кері байланыс, шетелдік студенттерді өзара оқытуға тарту) және әртүрлі интерактивті және қызығушылық арттыратын әдістер. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелері қазақстандық педагогтар мен әдіскерлерге шетелдік әріптестер енгізетін педагогикалық инновациялардан хабардар болуға көмектесе алады. Бұл білімді медициналық студенттерге арналған ағылшын тіліндегі оқу бағдарламаларына тиімді тәжірибелерді енгізу үшін пайдалануға болады. Пациенттердің тәжірибесін түсіну мұғалімдердің медициналық мекемелердегі ағылшын тілінде сөйлейтін науқастардың коммуникативті мәселелері және дәрігер мен пациент арасындағы ең көп таралған қарым-қатынас сценарийлері туралы хабардарлығын арттыруы мүмкін. Бұл мұғалімдерге

сақтау саласындағы нақты қарым-қатынасқа жақсырақ дайындау үшін сабақтарын бейімдеуге көмектеседі.

Түйін сөздер: Арнайы мақсаттағы ағылшын тілі, МАЛФ, медициналық студенттер, дәрігер мен пациенттің қарым-қатынасы

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Медицинский английский как лингва франка: опыт пациентов и стратегии преподавания

В статье отражены результаты исследования с использованием смешанных методов, направленного на изучение текущего состояния использования английского языка как лингва франка в казахстанских медицинских учреждениях и международных достижений в области преподавания английского языка для медицинских целей. Для достижения этой цели мы использовали как количественные (опрос), так и качественные (систематический обзор) методы исследования. Среди потенциальных англоговорящих пациентов, которые в настоящее время учатся или проживают в Казахстане (n = 44), был проведен анонимный опрос. Выяснилось, что значительное число пациентов часто посещают больницы для лечения легких заболеваний (например, простуда, грипп), плановых осмотров и получения медицинских справок, но многие из них сталкиваются с трудностями в общении. В ходе систематического обзора, проведенного в соответствии с рекомендациями PRISMA, для окончательного анализа было отобрано 12 статей, которые позволили выявить эффективные педагогические инновации в обучении английскому языку студентов-медиков, улучшающие языковые навыки и академическую успеваемость. В частности, в рассмотренных исследованиях было выявлено несколько тенденций, таких как обучение с использованием технологий (микроблоги, мета вселенная, смешанное обучение), совместное обучение и обучение со сверстниками (обратная связь со сверстниками, привлечение иностранных студентов к взаимному обучению), а также различные интерактивные и вовлекающие методы. Результаты данного исследования могут помочь казахстанским педагогам и методистам быть в курсе педагогических инноваций, внедряемых зарубежными коллегами. Эти знания могут быть использованы для внедрения эффективных практик в учебные программы по английскому языку для студентов-медиков. Понимание опыта пациентов может повысить осведомленность преподавателей о коммуникативных проблемах, с которыми сталкиваются англоговорящие пациенты в медицинских учреждениях, и о наиболее распространенных сценариях общения между врачом и пациентом. Это может помочь преподавателям адаптировать свои занятия, чтобы лучше подготовить студентов-медиков к реальному общению в сфере здравоохранения.

Ключевые слова: Английский для специальных целей, МАЛФ, студенты-медики, общение между врачом и пациентом.

Introduction

The aim of university-level English course in Kazakhstani universities is to achieve the specified language proficiency levels (A2, B1 or B2 depending on the learner's language level at the start), which are aligned with international standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference (Order of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022; Annex 3 to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018). According to state education standards, when teaching English to non-English-major students, teachers are supposed (1) to equip students with foundational English language skills that enable them to communicate effectively in everyday situations, and (2) to support in acquiring English language skills relevant to their future professions, especially in fields where English is widely used for communication and research. English in medical education is of no exception. Empowering medical students with the necessary linguistic and communicative competence to succeed academically and professionally in an increasingly globalized world is important. Tweedie and Johnson (2019) highlight the growing significance of Medical English as a Lingua Franca (MELF) in healthcare communication, emphasizing its role as a common language facilitating interactions among healthcare professionals and patients from different countries and language backgrounds.

As of 1 February 2024, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a total of 12,882 foreign nationals are working in Kazakhstan under the permits of local executive bodies. The main coun-

tries of origin of labour migrants are China – 4,045 (31.4 per cent), India – 1,152 (8.9 per cent), Turkey – 1,110 (8.6 per cent), Uzbekistan – 673 people (5.2 per cent). In addition, more than 26 thousand foreign students are studying in Kazakhstani universities in the 2023/2024 academic year (Zanina, 2024). Astana and Almaty are the cities with the highest concentration of labour migrants and foreign students. We can assume that the substantial number of these foreigners are English-speaking people, and they might visit a local hospital at least once.

In our research, we intended to study teaching innovations in English for medical purposes (EMP) implemented by international counterparts and analyse the patient experiences since there is a very small body of research on the application of English as a Lingua Franca in the Kazakhstani healthcare context. So, the **main goal of our research** is to fill this research gap by studying the communication experiences of English-speaking patients with their healthcare providers in Kazakhstan and summarizing the innovative teaching practices suggested by educators and methodologists abroad.

To achieve this goal, the following three **key research questions** were explored:

1. How effectively do Kazakhstani doctors communicate in English with their patients?

2. Which communication methods do English-speaking patients use most during medical visits?

3. What innovative practices are being implemented to enhance English language education for medical students in different countries?

Theoretical significance of this study lies in the summarization of the findings of research conducted by foreign English language teachers and methodologists. **The practical significance** of the study lies in its potential to provide insights that can inspire further research among foreign language teachers and young scientists. This can lead to deeper knowledge and improvements in the quality of foreign language education in Kazakhstani medical universities.

Literature review

Kazakhstani researchers highlighted that in Kazakhstan, three languages–Kazakh, Russian, and English–are used in different spheres with varying proficiency (Koptleuova et al., 2023). While studying the language situation in the Kazakhstani healthcare sector, the authors revealed high awareness among doctors about the importance of knowing and learning English language. However, according to the results of the survey of health workers (n = 700), more than half of the respondents (64%) reported limited English proficiency (Koptleuova et al., 2023).

Foreign researchers find the topic of English proficiency in healthcare communication to be highly significant (Tweedie & Johnson, 2019). One such research on the use of English as a Lingua Franca was conducted in Finland by Joronen (2024). The author presented survey results indicating that Finnish healthcare providers generally assess their English clinical communication skills positively, although their knowledge of medical vocabulary was weaker (Joronen, 2024). In Algeria, Ammari (2022) studied how Algerian and Chinese doctors use English to communicate in the Algerian context, exploring how they use it and what challenges they face. The author noted that Algerian doctors generally have limited proficiency in English and prefer using French when possible. When they do use English, Algerian doctors tend to simplify and reduce their sentences and use medical terms less frequently compared to their Chinese counterparts. Whereas Chinese healthcare providers struggled with pronunciation difficulties (Ammari, 2022). Similar research was conducted in Netherlands by Schoon (2021). The aim of his master's thesis was to investigate the specific characteristics of English being used as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in the communication between doctors and patients. It was found out that the content of ELF communication between doctors and patients resembles consultations where both parties speak the same native language (Schoon, 2021). Additionally, Schoon revealed that pragmatic strategies like code-switching, repetition, confirmation, and clarification help to improve communication in medical settings. They also serve to fix misunderstandings when communication is less effective (Schoon, 2021). However, the author emphasizes the ideal scenario for non-Dutch speaking patients in the Netherlands is to use professional interpreters when needed to overcome language and cultural barriers effectively (Schoon, 2021). Another study was performed in Qatar, nursing students and instructors were asked to listen and analyze the intelligibility of interactions in MELF, in relationship to patient safety. Because of the revealed phonological and vocabulary intelligibility issues, the authors emphasized the need for incorporating interactive and authentic listening exercises, as well as frequency-based vocabulary instruction, into English language curricula for nursing education (Tweedie & Johnson, 2018).

In closing, the evidence from these studies suggests that the topic of teaching and speaking English in healthcare communication is of a substantial interest for foreign researchers. However, there is a

limited amount of research exploring the experience of doctors and patients on the use of ELF in healthcare settings in Kazakhstan.

Research methods

Data for this study were gathered using an online self-administered questionnaire created with Google Forms. The survey was conducted from May 25, 2024, to June 2, 2024. Participants answered five main questions, in addition to three demographic questions. The survey link with an invitation letter were distributed to the international student communities of several universities in Almaty with a high concentration of foreign students. The subsequent step of our research involved systematic review since constructing research based on the established knowledge forms the fundamental basis of all academic research endeavours, irrespective of the field (Snyder, 2019). We selected relevant literature using the flow diagrams recommended by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to ensure a systematic and thorough review (Page et. al., 2021). All statistical analysis and figures were created using Microsoft Excel and Word (Microsoft Office 2016).

Research results

A total of 61 people initially took part in the online anonymous self-administered survey. However, 17 responses were excluded for various reasons, leaving 44 valid responses. Here are the details of the exclusions: Reason 1 – Respondent from Kazakhstan: 1 response removed because the individual was from Kazakhstan, which was outside the scope of the research. Reason 2 – Unclear country of origin: 1 response removed due to an unclear statement regarding the country of origin. Reason 3 – Educational reasons: 1 response removed because the respondent visited medical facilities solely for educational purposes. Reason 4 – No medical services in Kazakhstan: 14 responses removed because these individuals never received medical services while being in Kazakhstan.

Demographic information: Table 1 provides detailed demographic information about our respondents. The substantial number of respondents were Indian (50,00%), followed by smaller proportions of Afghan (15,90%), Indonesian (11,36%), and other nationalities (22,74%). A significant majority of the respondents were students (93,18%). A small percentage are expatriates (4,55%) and permanent residents married to Kazakh residents (2,27%). Nearly half of the respondents have been in Kazakhstan from 6 months to 1 year (47,73%). 29,55% have stayed for 1 to 2 years, and 15.91% have been there for more than 2 years. Over half of the respondents have visited a medical facility once (54,55%). 29,54% have visited 2-3 times, and 15,90% have visited more than 3 times, indicating varying levels of interaction with healthcare services.

Table 1 – Profiles of the respondents

Variables	*Type*	*n*	*% (n = 44)*
Nationality	Indian	22	50,00%
	Afghan	7	15,90%
	Indonesian	5	11,36%
	Chinese	3	6,81%
	Turkish	2	4,55%
	Nigerian	2	4,55%
	Arab	1	2,27%
	Zambian	1	2,27%
	Sudanese	1	2,27%
Current status in Kazakhstan	Student (studying at a university or college)	41	93,18%
	Expatriate (residing long-term but not a citizen)	2	4,55%
	Permanent resident marrying Kazakh resident	1	2,27%

Variables	Type	n	% (n = 44)
Length of stay in Kazakhstan	Less than 6 months	3	6,81%
	6 months to 1 year	21	47,73%
	1 to 2 years	13	29,55%
	More than 2 years	7	15,91%
Healthcare visit frequency	Once	24	54,55%
	2-3 times	13	29,54%
	More than 3 times	7	15,90%

Reasons for healthcare visits: Table 2 presents the primary reasons for the most recent visits to a hospital or medical facility among 42 respondents. Two respondents did not provide details regarding the reason for their hospital visit. Each respondent could select multiple reasons. The most frequent reason, with 33,33%, was for minor illnesses such as colds or flu. Another frequent reason, with 28,57%, was obtaining a medical certificate, highlighting administrative needs as a common cause for medical visits. Routine check-up was also a common reason, with 28,57% of respondents. Both injury and other specified reasons (such as blood tests, chest X-rays, and immunizations) accounted for 9.52% each, indicating a variety of medical needs beyond routine care and minor illnesses.

Table 2 – Respondents' primary reasons for last medical facility visit

Question: *What was the primary reason for your most recent visit to a hospital or medical facility? (Select all that apply)*	n	% (n = 42)
1. Routine check-up	12	28,57%
2. Vaccination	2	4,76%
3. Minor illness (e.g., cold, flu)	14	33,33%
4. Chronic condition management (e.g., diabetes, asthma)	1	2,38%
5. Emergency or urgent care	1	2,38%
6. Injury	4	9,52%
7. Mental health services	1	2,38%
8. Specialist consultation	5	11,90%
9. Obtaining a medical certificate (e.g., for work, university)	12	28,57%
10. Other (specified by the respondents): "For blood test", "chest X-ray", "caused fever", "immunization for my baby"	4	9,52%

Research question 1: How effectively do Kazakhstani doctors communicate in English with their patients?

The following pie charts illustrate responses regarding the effectiveness of English communication by doctors (Figure 1A) and answers about the clarity of communication about diagnoses and treatment plans (Figure 1B).

According to Figure 1A, no respondents felt that doctors were "never" able to communicate effectively. However, a significant number of respondents (47,73%) indicated that doctors "rarely" communicated effectively in English. Only 15,90% felt that doctors "always" communicated effectively, and another 15,90% felt it was effective "most of the time." 20,46% felt that communication was effective only "sometimes." This indicates a clear need for improvement in English communication skills among doctors.
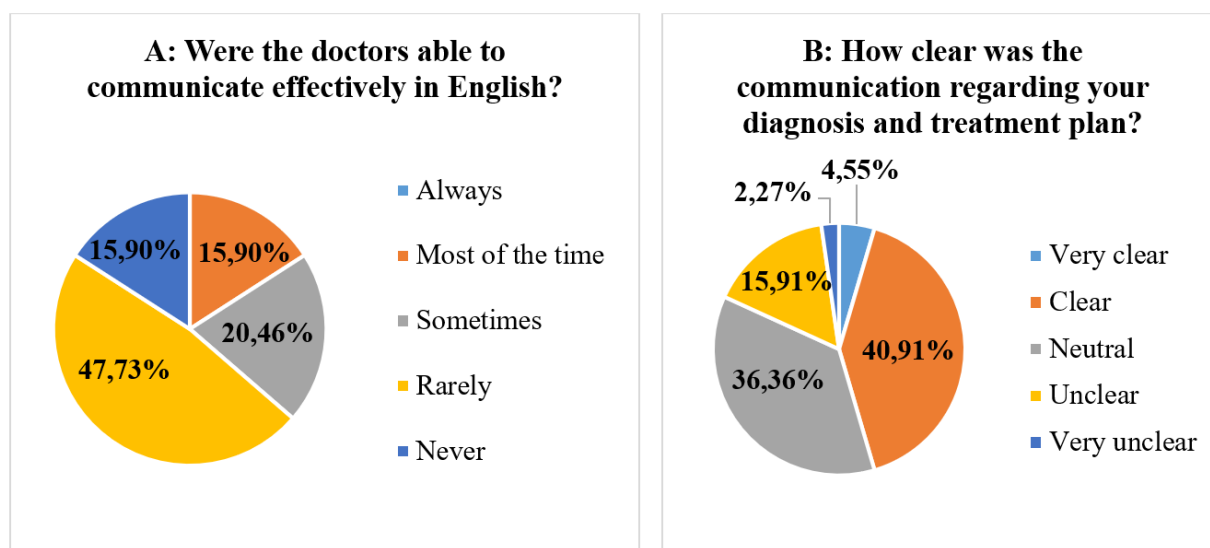
Figure 1 – A: Communication effectiveness; B: Communication clarity.

As Figure 1B suggests, most respondents found the communication regarding their diagnosis and treatment plan to be either "clear" (40,91%) or "neutral" (36,36%). However, 18,18% (15,91% "unclear" + 2,27% "very unclear") found the communication lacking in clarity, indicating that there is room for improvement in how medical information is conveyed to patients.

Research question 2: Which communication methods do English-speaking patients use most during medical visits?

The bar chart (Figure 2) illustrates the methods used by respondents to communicate with doctors during their medical visits.

Figure 2 shows that a relatively small proportion of respondents n = 5 (11,63%) reported that their doctor spoke English fluently. The majority, 22 respondents (51,16%), relied on translation apps or devices to communicate with their doctors. A small number, 3 respondents (6,98%), used a professional translator provided by the medical facility. 6 respondents (13,95%) brought a friend or family member who could translate. 7 respondents (15,28%) indicated that the doctor spoke Kazakh or Russian and they understood.

Research question 3: What innovative practices are being implemented to enhance English language education for medical students in different countries?

We conducted a comprehensive search using the Scopus database with keyword "English language teaching" (Figure 3). A total of 29,935 articles were identified through the database searching. An additional query of the keyword "medical students" was applied, resulting in the exclusion of 29,409 articles that were not within our research interest. The next exclusion criteria included the year of publication (2019–2024, excluded – n = 306), publication type (article, excluded – n = 143), and access type (open access, excluded – n = 41). Titles and abstracts of the remaining 102 articles were screened for relevance. Articles that were not related to teaching methods in English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and non-interventional studies were excluded. This step resulted in 12 articles being selected for the final review.
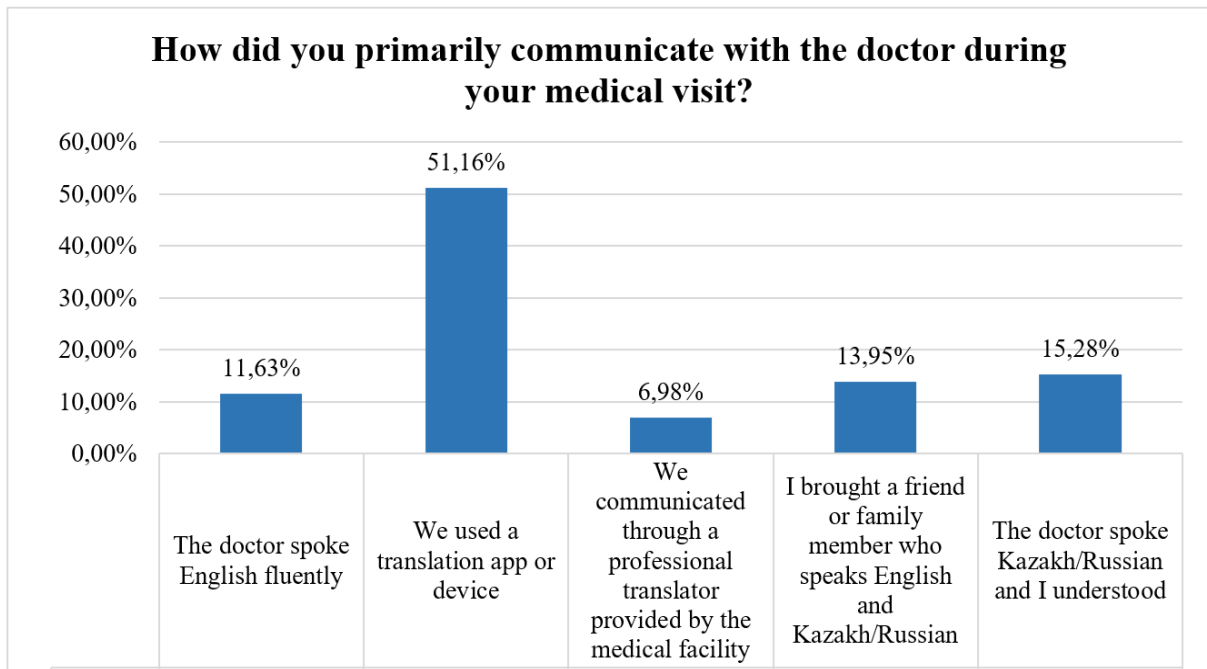
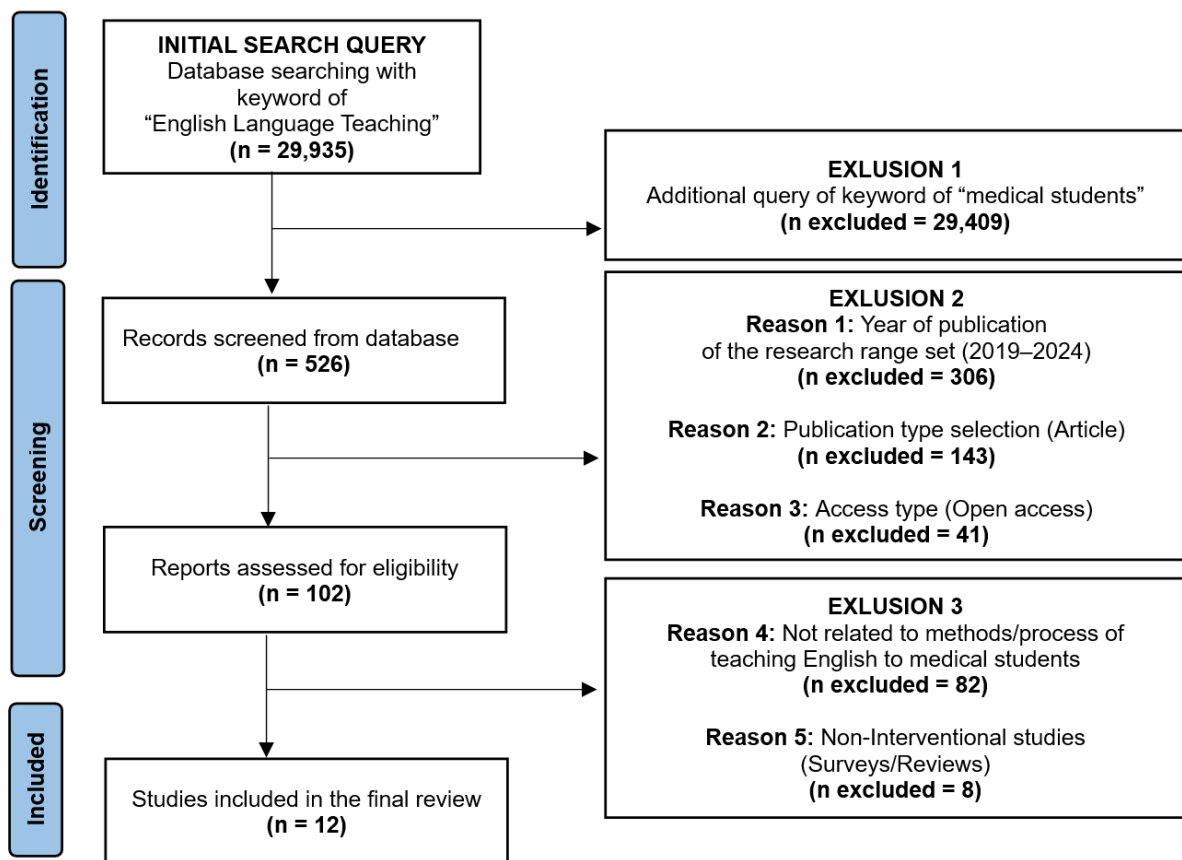**Figure 2** – Communication method with doctor (n = 43)

Figure 3 – PRISMA Flow Diagram for Article Selection on Teaching English to Medical Students

Table 3 – Findings of intervention-based studies (n = 12)

Author (s):	Country:	Method/Sample/Duration:	Type of intervention:	Findings & Outcomes:
Gaffas (2024)	Saudi Arabia	Design-based research (DBR)/ 1st-year premedical undergraduate students (n=19)/ over 16 weeks	Microblogging-based instruction on platform X	Improved use of medical language, knowledge of medical terms, reading and writing skills, enhanced collaboration and discussions.
Khaleghi et al. (2024)	Saudi Arabia	Qualitative action research/ Premedical undergraduate university students (n=30)/ trimester	Explicit grammar instruction	Improved writing skills of adult EFL learners, reduction of recurring grammar errors
İbỉỉ et al. (2024)	Türkiye	Mixed methods research/ First-year medical students (n=100/ 4weeks)	Metaverse environments	Enhanced language skills, especially reading, vocabulary acquisition, and listening
Wu et al. (2023)	China	Longitudinal interventional study/ Freshmen medical students (n = 124)/ 18-week semester	Peer feedback in medical English writing classrooms	Enhanced academic writing skills, task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy
Wagner et al. (2022)	Russia	Experimental study/ First year medical students (n=80: EG = 62, CG = 18)	Interactive methods (group discussions, brainstorming, problem-solving)	Positive influence on performance indicators
Su, Tsai, Tai (2022)	Taiwan	Action research method/ Nursing students (n = 49)/ 18 weeks	Targeted language course (nursing note-writing training course (NNWC))	Enhanced student motivation, engagement, and language proficiency
Hekmati (2022)	Iran	Qualitative action research/ Freshmen medical students (n = 55)/ spring semester	Project-based learning	Increased autonomy, engagement, medical vocabulary, motivation, and fair evaluations
Rusalkina and Tomashevska (2022)	Ukraine	Model-based experiment/ Medical students (n = 300)	Model of English-language professional teaching	Significant positive changes in language proficiency and professional readiness
Lin et al. (2021)	China	Objective & subjective evaluation/Medical students (n = 242)/ 18 class hours	Blended teaching module (Smart Class)	Comparable outcomes to traditional teaching, viable for remote instruction
Hild et al. (2021) [22]	Hungary	Qualitative exploratory approach/ Medical students (n = 28)/ semester	International students as peer tutors in English role-play activities	Reduced language anxiety, increased willingness to communicate, and fostered intercultural understanding
Sharipova et al. (2020)	Uzbekistan	Survey/ employers (n = 35) Action research/ First-year medical students (n = 28)	Interactive learning methods (graphic organizers and role-play games)	Increased student motivation and interest
Rodis and Locsin (2019)	Japan	Longitudinal interventional study/ Medical students (n = 203)	Active learning activities (International Group Discussion, Student-Teacher Experience, and Role-Play)	Boosted student motivation, useful feedback, improved understanding of course material

As a result of systemic review, we identified that the considered research topic is spread across various countries with varying levels of intensity, indicating a global interest in the topic of teaching English for medical purposes, and traced several trends. Namely, three studies were focused on **technology-enhanced learning**. One study from Saudi Arabia aimed (1) to develop and implement microblogging-based instruction on platform X for a medical English ESP course, and (2) examine its pedagogical value and impact on students' specialized language performance (Gaffas, 2024) . Z.M. Gaffas(2024) found out that microblogging-based instruction on platform X improved students' use of medical language, knowledge of medical terms, and reading and writing skills along with enhancing collaboration and discussions outside class . However, challenges faced by students included limited subject knowledge, stress from mandatory use, and login issues. Second study was conducted in Tür-

kiye, comparing the effects of Metaverse-supported synchronous online flipped learning and Canvas-based synchronous distance education on students' academic achievement in a medical English course (İbïlĭ et al., 2024) . Authors discovered that Metaverse environments significantly enhance language skills, especially in reading, vocabulary acquisition, and listening. However, their effectiveness was limited by the low perception of reality, time-consuming activities, and insufficient number of videos or printed materials before teaching. Effective teaching scenarios are essential for maximizing these benefits. The third study from China aimed to evaluate the efficacy of the Smart Class teaching module for rehabilitation-related medical English and compare it with the Traditional Class teaching module (Lin et al., 2021) . The authors found that both the Smart Class (a blended teaching module) and Traditional Class teaching modules achieved similar outcomes, making the former a viable alternative for remote instruction and flexible independent learning when traditional teaching is not possible.

Next trend revealed within our systematic review was **collaborative and peer-assisted learning**. The study of Wu et al. aimed to examine the influence of peer feedback on the development of medical students' English writing skills over time. Authors detected that integrating peer feedback into process-oriented medical English writing classrooms significantly enhances Chinese medical students' academic writing skills as well as task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy (Wu et al., 2023) . Next study aimed to understand Hungarian medical students' views on involving international students as peer tutors in English role-play activities. The results showed that peer tutors helped reduce language anxiety, increased the students' willingness to communicate in English, and fostered intercultural understanding. The use of English as the lingua franca in class helped to prevent students from switching to their first language. (Hild et al., 2021). A further investigation aimed to introduce the implementation of three active learning styles in the Dental English course. The study found that using three active learning activities such as International Group Discussion, Student-Teacher Experience, and Role-Play Activities created a positive learning environment. These activities boosted student motivation, offered useful feedback, and improved understanding of the course material (Rodis and Locsin, 2019). Taiwanese researchers developed an online nursing note-writing training course

(NNWC) with the use of such teaching strategies as process writing pedagogy, multiple revisions, intra-group peer review, teacher indirect and direct feedback. The results indicate that the model effectively enhanced nursing students' writing performance, despite moderate satisfaction with the course design due to its demanding nature (Su, Tsai, Tai, 2022) .

Following that, several studies are focused on **interactive and engaging methods**. For instance, Russian researchers intended to create comfortable learning environment which will enhance students' professional communication skills in English to the B2 level. The research concluded that the use of interactive methods in teaching English such as group discussions, brainstorming sessions, problem-solving had a positive influence on the performance indicators of the experimental group (Wagner et al., 2022) . In another study, Uzbekistani researchers aimed to improve English language teaching in Uzbekistan's medical institutes using interactive learning methods. Such interactive learning methods as graphic organizers and role-play games increased student motivation and interest, emphasizing the need for innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance language competence and prepare medical students for international professional communication (Sharipova et al., 2020) . Iranian researcher, Hekmati aimed to examine the impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on medical students' performance in an online English course. The author recognized that doing projects benefited students by fostering their autonomy, increasing engagement, expanding medical vocabulary, enhancing motivation, ensuring fair evaluations, and providing ongoing insights for instructors (Hekmati, 2022) . In a qualitative action research with pre-medical students from Saudi Arabia, authors revealed that explicit grammar instruction improves the writing skills of adult EFL learners. However, they insist that teachers are the ones who should decide which grammar points to explain explicitly based on their students' specific needs. The research suggests that ignoring the recurring grammar errors can lead to fossilized mistakes (Khaleghi et al., 2024) . In Ukraine, Rusalkina and Tomashevska developed a model of English-language professional teaching of future doctors with the gradual introduction of certain pedagogical conditions such as visualization lectures, problem situations of doctor-patient interaction, discussions and round tables. The effectiveness of the model was proved to be effective by significant positive changes in the experimental group in contrast to the control (Rusalkina & Tomashevska, 2022) .

Discussion

Patients survey: Respondents visited medical facilities for a wide range of reasons, from routine care to specialist consultations and administrative purposes. The most common reasons for recent medical visits were for minor illnesses, routine check-ups, and obtaining medical certificates. Vaccinations, chronic condition management, emergency care, and mental health services were less frequently cited, but they still represent critical areas of healthcare that require attention. This analysis highlights the diverse range of medical needs within the English-speaking population and can be used for improving medical education, particularly in teaching English to medical students to better handle these varied scenarios. The data indicates a significant challenge in effective English communication by doctors, with nearly half of the respondents stating that communication was "rarely" effective. While many respondents found the communication about their diagnosis and treatment plan to be "clear," a substantial portion still experienced unclear communication. The survey results also indicate a significant dependence on technology for overcoming language barriers during medical consultations. Even though in some cases professional translation services were available, they came out to be not the primary method of communication for most patients. In addition, some patients relied on their personal network for translation assistance during medical visits and a portion of the patients can speak the local language without requiring additional translation support. The reliance on translation apps and personal networks highlights the need for better language support in medical settings.

Systematic review: Foreign methodologists employed various interventions in language education which showed positive outcomes. Such technological enhancements as microblogging-based instruction, metaverse environments and blended teaching modules had beneficial impact on medical students. As reported by researchers, they helped instructors to improve medical language use, knowledge of medical terms, and collaboration among students. Explicit grammar instruction facilitated in the reduction of grammar errors and enhanced writing skills in adult EFL learners. Collaborative and peer-assisted learning helped to increase student motivation and reduce learning anxiety. Interactive and engaging methods, such as project-based learning, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, problem-solving tasks, role-play games boosted language skills, student engagement, and motivation.

We tried to summarize the latest teaching trends practiced in teaching English to medical students worldwide for equipping our teachers with versatile strategies.

Conclusions

According to our survey results, the predominant method of communication was using a translation app or device, followed by understanding the doctor speaking Kazakh or Russian. This shows the limited language proficiency among healthcare providers. As a result of the systematic review, we can assume that there is a clear trend towards using technology and interactive methods in teaching English to medical students. Digital platforms, microblogging and virtual environments are used to enhance language learning and collaboration, though they can also bring challenges like technical issues and added stress. Peer-feedback and interacting with international students in peer-teaching had a positive impact on learners since the main communication language was English. Interactive activities such as group discussions, role-playing and problem-solving help to improve student performance. These teaching methods can help medical students become more confident and effective in future real-life patient interactions. Teaching methods tailored to specific medical contexts, such as doctor/nurse-patient communication, can make the lessons more relevant and effective. This ensures that medical students learn the language skills directly applicable to their professional interactions, helping them understand and respond to patients accurately. By integrating these trends, medical education can more effectively break down language barriers, leading to improved doctor-patient communication and better healthcare outcomes.

However, this study has several limitations that should be noted. Firstly, the sample size of respondents was small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Survey of potential patients from diverse status groups and across various cities could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the communication experiences of English-speaking patients with their healthcare providers. Additionally, for the systematic review component, the inclusion of multiple databases would have provided a more comprehensive analysis of the literature.

Acknowledgements

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