



DEGREE OF ACQUISITION OF TYPICAL BULGARIAN LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS FROM STUDENT PRACTICE IN A HOSPITAL BY FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS

Iv. Angelova*

Department of Medical Psychology, Social activities and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Medicine, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

The aim of the scientific article is to investigate the extent to which foreign students of Medicine (English-language education) have mastered expressions characteristic of the Bulgarian language from the student practice in a hospital, carried out during their training. The article used a **methodology** based on an author's language test, developed specifically for the purposes of the study. A study was carried out, which established **results** showing to what extent the respondents have actually mastered the necessary specialized Bulgarian terminology and how this affects the process of their adaptation in a Bulgarian university. In **the conclusion**, some measures are proposed in order to improve the quality of education and obtain better results from it.

Keywords: learning a foreign language, Bulgarian language, training, medical students, foreign students, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The changes that have occurred in the European educational space in recent decades increasingly emphasize the need for in-depth study of foreign languages and improvement of the process of foreign language teaching in universities (1). The same applies to the teaching of Bulgarian as a foreign language in universities in Bulgaria. The comprehensiveness and continuity of professional education, its interdisciplinary integration, close interaction and coordinated work of the humanitarian, theoretical and clinical departments of the medical university are becoming an integral part of the process of training highly qualified medical personnel. Nowadays, the problem of choosing approaches, methods and techniques for teaching Bulgarian in a multi-ethnic and multicultural educational space is relevant. The aim of the article is to reveal some features of

the acquisition of specific medical terminology by foreign medical students at a Bulgarian university.

Successful teaching of Bulgarian as a foreign language can be ensured through a detailed study of the motivational system of learning in specific conditions, taking into account all stages of cyclical training at the medical university.

Formation of positive motivation and determination (control) of the level of language proficiency at each stage:

- full proficiency (to a high degree) of the language;
- conscious mastery of the language;
- equal mastery of both languages (in this case English and Bulgarian);
- the speaker can pronounce complete, meaningful statements in another language;
- knowledge of the grammatical structure of another language;
- has the student studied other foreign languages? (2) – these are the support points that should be used.

*Correspondence to: Ivelina Angelova,
Department of Medical Psychology, Social
activities and Foreign Languages, Faculty of
Medicine, Trakia University – Stara Zagora,
Bulgaria, Stara Zagora 6000, Armeiska 11 Street,
e-mail address: ivelina.angelova@trakia-uni.bg

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subjects studied were 117 students from 1st to 5th year (including), full-time, majoring in Medicine, English-language education at Trakia University, Faculty of Medicine – Stara Zagora. The gender distribution of the subjects studied was: 60 women and 57 men, among whom were representatives of the following 13 countries:

1. England – 77 students;
2. Germany – 10 students;
3. India – 6 students;
4. Greece – 5 students;
5. Ireland – 5 students;
6. Norway – 3 students;
7. Finland – 3 students;
8. Sweden – 2 students;
9. Scotland – 2 students;
10. Switzerland – 1 student;
11. Morocco – 1 student;
12. Turkey – 1 student;
13. Netherlands – 1 student;

By courses, the number of foreign medical students is:

- I year – 33 students;

- II year – 35 students;
- III year – 13 students;
- IV year – 21 students;
- V year – 15 students.

The distribution in age groups looks like this:

- Up to 20 years old – 39 students;
- From 21-25 years old – 48 students;
- From 26-30 years old – 21 students;
- Over 30 years old – 9 students.

Of the total number of students (117), for 77 English is the native language, and for 42 it is the second (official) language.

The test, which was conducted with the students, contains 20 sentences (with a small part of the studied medical terminology included in them). 15 of the sentences are interrogative, and 5 are declarative. All the expressions included in the test are part of the mandatory questions that the doctor asks the patient when taking an anamnesis. 40% of the expressions given in the test were not perceived by the respondents, and the other 60% received a positive answer, i.e. were understood (**Figure 1**).

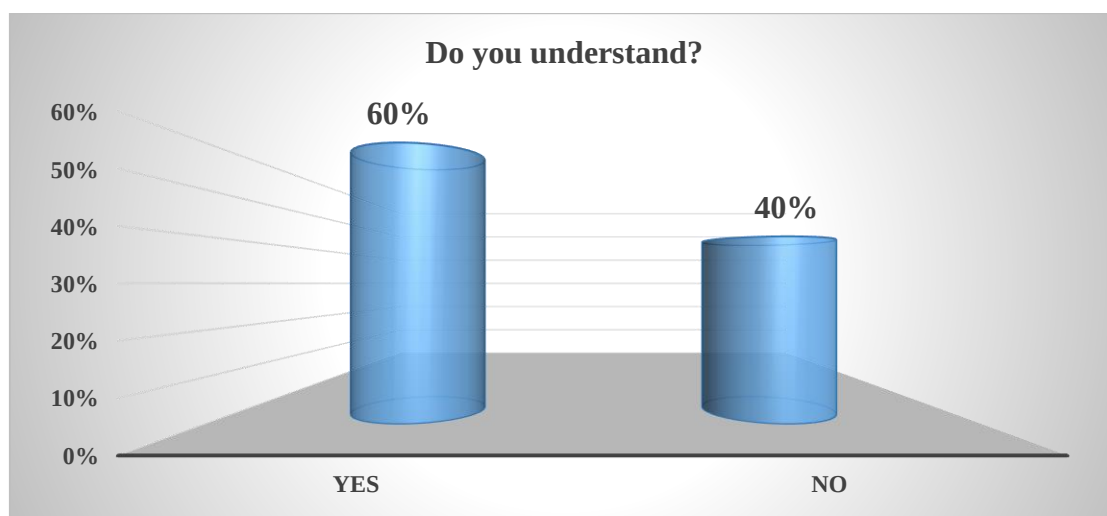


Figure 1. Results of the test “Degree of acquisition of typical Bulgarian language expressions from student practice in the hospital”

The responses to 8 of the statements are negative (40% of all statements), that is, the students do not understand them (**Table 1**).

More than half (60%) of all 20 expressions were learned and remembered by the students in the second year, which is a satisfactory result and this indicates a good and tending to high level of assimilation of the educational material related to the study of medical terminology, but it is probably necessary to work in this direction in Bulgarian language classes, since the

percentage of adopted expressions can become higher and thus the students will have better results from language training.

The actual difficulty for foreign students at this stage is the general scientific vocabulary, which is very typical of academic educational texts. Many times, students are faced with difficult and long words to read and pronounce, foreign and complex words, words with special meaning and specific syntactic functions.

Table 1. Test statements to which over 50% of respondents answered “No”

Expressions	Do you understand?
	(no) %
1. Are you feeling nauseous?	54
2. Is the pain worse during the day or at night?	51
3. Do you vomit often?	74
4. When did the pain start?	60
5. How long have you been complaining?	60
6. What other complaints do you have?	54
7. Are you coughing?	51
8. Do you feel weak?	80

For this reason, it is advisable, for example, to include the study of Bulgarian in the curriculum – as a regular or elective subject and in the third year of Medicine studies. This additional hours of the language to the program of third-year students will aim to fully emphasize the medical terminology, so necessary for their communication with patients. Due to the busy curriculum, this discipline could take only 30 hours – first and second semester, 1 hour of Bulgarian language each week. In this way, students will be able to contact the Bulgarian language professor and discuss with him current issues that arose during their practice in the clinical disciplines in the third year (Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, General and Operative Surgery, Radiology).

CONCLUSION

A certain part of the above-mentioned problems is due to the impossibility of individual work with students, as well as the lack of an entry-level level of their knowledge of the language (these students do not go through a preparatory academic year during which they can study Bulgarian, since the program for which they have enrolled in the specialty is entirely in English – lectures and practicals). Due to this fact, some of the guidelines for improving

training include the introduction of an intensive Bulgarian language course (20 days of 6 hours each – a total of 120 hours), which will begin before the academic year, for example from 15.08 – 15.09, in this way, before the very beginning of their training, the students will be familiar with the basics of the language, and this will facilitate further work with them. In order to improve the quality of training and obtain better results from it, it is good to consider options for refining the selection of first-year students, as well as reducing the number of students in one study group. These measures will lead to an increase in the academic language level of students, which will also contribute to a higher level of their academic adaptation.

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