PROBLEMS OF TEACHING LATIN TO FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS AND WAYS TO SOLVE THEM

M. S. Pshenychna*, V. V. Heorhievska**, M. V. Khaustova***

The article is dedicated to the consideration of the specifics of teaching Latin at the School of Medicine to foreign students at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Certain difficulties which arise before the teacher during the educational process due to the different level of language training of foreign students and decrease in students’ interest and motivation due to their failure to fulfil the teacher’s requirements, are outlined. The authors of the article propose to involve various teaching methods to enhance students’ educational and cognitive activity in Latin classes. They also pay attention to the need to master a sufficient amount of lexical material, noting that the list of obligatory grammar topics for students of the School of Medicine is relatively short. In order to develop future doctors’ linguistic mindset, acquire skills in the correct use of professional vocabulary and fluency in medical terminology in medical practice, the search for new methodological approaches to teaching Latin for English-speaking students has begun. Teachers’ experience demonstrates that the method of interdisciplinary learning is effective, since integration provides not only interconnection, but also interpenetration of individual academic disciplines into each other, which increases the cognitive activity of students and contributes to a more conscious assimilation of the material being studied. The use of information and communication technologies, as well as a combination of passive and active methods, including interactive ones, with the parallel use of semantisation and the brainstorming method, which involves putting forward creative ideas in the process of solving problems and stimulates students’ critical and creative thinking, are proposed to be used to increase the level of knowledge, the motivation, and the interest of students during the learning process. Pedagogical reflection is used for self-analysis of teachers’ work and updating the course curriculum in order to improve and transform traditional teaching methods in accordance with the problems faced by English-speaking groups.

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PROBLEMS IN TEACHING THE LATIN LANGUAGE TO FOREIGN STUDENTS OF THE MEDICAL FACULTY AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

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The article focuses on the teaching of the course "Latin Language and Fundamentals of Medical Terminology" in English at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University which has a successful long-term experience in training medical students, qualified teaching staff, scientific and educational research. The authors propose the use of different teaching methods to activate the educational and cognitive activity of students during practical classes in Latin language, and draw attention to the need to master a sufficient amount of lexical material, noting that at the same time the list of mandatory topics in grammar for medical students is relatively small. In order to develop the linguistic thinking of future doctors, mastering professional vocabulary and free command of medical terminology in medical practice, new methodological approaches to teaching Latin language for English-speaking students are being developed. The practical experience of lecturers demonstrates that an effective way is the method of interdisciplinary learning, as integration ensures not only interconnections, but also reciprocal penetration of separate educational disciplines, which enhances the cognitive activity of students and contributes to a more conscious assimilation of the material being studied. The use of information-communication technologies, as well as the combination of passive methods with active, including interactive, with parallel semanticization and the "brainstorm" method, which promotes the generation of creative ideas in the process of solving problems and stimulates critical and creative thinking, is recommended for improving the level of knowledge, motivation and interest of students during the educational process.

Keywords: teaching methods, foreign students, the Latin language, medical terminology, innovative methods, information, and communication technologies.

Introduction of the issue. Following global educational trends, many leading Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs) offer training in English and V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University is no exception. In order to perform the tasks facing modern higher medical education in Ukraine, it is necessary to conduct a continuous search and implementation of the most advanced modern teaching methods in the educational process and in teaching Latin language in particular [3]. This article will focus on the teaching of the course "Latin Language and Fundamentals of Medical Terminology" in English at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University which has a successful long-term experience in training medical students, qualified teaching staff, scientific and educational research. The authors propose the use of different teaching methods to activate the educational and cognitive activity of students during practical classes in Latin language, and draw attention to the need to master a sufficient amount of lexical material, noting that at the same time the list of mandatory topics in grammar for medical students is relatively small. In order to develop the linguistic thinking of future doctors, mastering professional vocabulary and free command of medical terminology in medical practice, new methodological approaches to teaching Latin language for English-speaking students are being developed. The practical experience of lecturers demonstrates that an effective way is the method of interdisciplinary learning, as integration ensures not only interconnections, but also reciprocal penetration of separate educational disciplines, which enhances the cognitive activity of students and contributes to a more conscious assimilation of the material being studied. The use of information-communication technologies, as well as the combination of passive methods with active, including interactive, with parallel semanticization and the "brainstorm" method, which promotes the generation of creative ideas in the process of solving problems and stimulates critical and creative thinking, is recommended for improving the level of knowledge, motivation and interest of students during the educational process.

Postanovka problemy. Дотримуючись світових освітніх тенденцій, багато провідних українських закладів вищої освіти (надалі ЗВО) пропонують навчання англійською мовою і Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Караціна не є винятком (надалі ХНУ). Для реалізації завдань, що стоять перед сучасною вищою медичною освітою в Україні, необхідно проводити безперервний пошук і впровадження в навчальний процес найбільш передових сучасних методів викладання і латинської мови зокрема [3]. У цій статті йтиметься про викладання дисципліни "Латинська мова і основи медичної термінології" англійською мовою у ХНУ імені В.Н. Караціна, який має унікальний багаторічний досвід підготовки студентів-медиків, кваліфікований викладацький
methodological materials, which makes it possible to provide all professional needs for the training of doctors in accordance with the requirements of modern society.

Latin is a completely new discipline for first-year students, which has not been studied before, so it causes some difficulties in learning academic material. In HEI Latin is taught in order to instil into students the basics of studying and using medical terminology not only in the academic environment but also in their future professional activities, and thus the goal of the subject is to train a terminologically educated doctor. Teaching of the discipline "Latin Language and Fundamentals of Medical Terminology" at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University at the School of Medicine is provided by the Department of History of Foreign Literature and Classical Philology, and the educational process is carried out in English on the basis of the standard curriculum for medical students. In this regard, the teachers of the department should improve not only their professional teaching skills and constantly improve their level of foreign language proficiency, but also annually update lecture materials, presentations and exercises, considering the peculiarities of the native languages of the students. It is worth noting that foreign students have different levels of English, which complicates the learning process when explaining a new foreign language (Latin) in another foreign language (English). The traditional approach in such groups proved to be extremely ineffective, with a low level of student motivation and, consequently, knowledge of foreign language, which prompted us to look for new, sometimes non-trivial, teaching methods and techniques. In this regard, the issue of methods of teaching Latin to English-speaking students with different levels of English proficiency is a subject of constant discussion among the scientific and pedagogical staff of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, which determines the relevance of our research.

Current state of the issue. In the domestic scientific field of pedagogy, there are a number of articles devoted to the problems of managing the educational process in

Outline of the unresolved issues brought up in the article. Since teaching Latin to foreign medical students with different levels of English proficiency in a group has not become a separate subject of study yet.

Aim of research is to outline the problems of teaching Latin in English at the School of Medicine to foreign students and ways to solve them.

Results and discussions. Teaching Latin in English causes certain difficulties, especially for those students for whom it is not at least the second official language of the country of their origin. During the study of Latin language, special attention is paid to memorizing terms. Many words in English denoting terms are of Greek-Latin origin, so mastering them is not difficult for a person who is fluent in English. However, it is much more difficult to learn terms for students whose native language (such as Arabic or Persian) is not replete with borrowings from English. The words can be completely different in those languages. Students have to spend more time memorizing them. The situation gets even worse when we talk about foreign students with a low level of language proficiency. It happens that they do not know enough English words, and the teacher has to spend more time explaining a particular term. Students must learn the lexical minimum that is required to master the discipline within two semesters and is intended to be memorized at the level of long-term memory. It is words and term-elements selected on the basis of frequency of use, thematic importance, and word-formation valence. In order to facilitate memorization, a teacher can use the method of associative connections or searching for derivatives in English, for example: the word gaster [stomach] can be remembered using the familiar word gastritis, or the word nasus [nose] with the similar-sounding word nose. This approach contributes to the development of the speech conjecture, that is, the ability to derive the meaning of a word.
from its morphological composition, the ability to see Latin word-forming elements in other languages.

Memorizing words is an integral part of Latin language classes. These words have to be memorized in vocabulary form, which helps in performing grammatical exercises and understanding the formation of terminological phrases. The lexical minimum should be memorised by learning the word in its full vocabulary form (nouns in the nominative and genitive cases with the indication of gender, adjectives of the first and second declensions with the endings of all three genders, and adjectives of the third declension in three or two forms, for adjectives with three and two endings, or in the nominative and genitive cases for adjectives with one ending). Automatic knowledge of grammatical forms, which is necessary for orientation in anatomical, clinical and pharmaceutical Latin, requires rote learning, which is indispensable. However, unlike Ukrainian students, foreign students hardly fulfil the teacher’s requirements to learn words by heart, which might be because of the different requirements for students in different countries in secondary education institutions. Experience shows that relaxation of requirements leads to the accumulation of unlearned material that in its turn leads to the student’s confusion in front of the teacher: the unlearned material increases and the grammar becomes more complicated, which eventually makes Latin complicated and uninteresting.

It is worth noting that teaching Latin at School of Medicine does not require learning a large amount of grammatical material – only those aspects are considered which are necessary to be able to construct and understand anatomical terms (singular and plural forms of nominative and genitive cases in the system of Latin declension of nouns and adjectives), as well as to acquire skills in writing prescriptions (necessary verb forms, preposition management). However, it is difficult for foreign students with insufficient language skills and knowledge to deal with such grammatical categories as case, gender, and declension. Memorizing words in their dictionary forms
helps to talk not only about the lexical content of the word, but also about some of its grammatical parameters.

Teaching new vocabulary usually begins with semantisation – explaining the meaning of new lexical items. In English-speaking groups of foreign students, the teacher uses the principle of bilingualism: Latin word/term → English equivalent. However, in multicultural groups with students from different countries with different language backgrounds, due to insufficient English proficiency, the principle of trilingualism is used: along with the vocabulary of Latin terms and English translations, students make notes in their native language (Hindi, Persian, Arabic, etc.) [1].

Experience shows that the semantisation of lexical items is conventionally divided into translatable and untranslatable [3]. In the translated method of revealing the meaning of Latin terms, a one-word translation is used (costa, ae f – rib; pulmo, onis m – lung; oculus, i m – eye, etc.), which sometimes may have a two-word translation (a traced translation of a medical term), along with which a commonly used English word is added (cranium, i n – cranium, skull; crista, ae f – crista, crest; femur, oris n – femur, thigh, etc.), as well as a multi-word translation (cortex, icis m – cortex, outer layer, bark; digitus, i m – digit, finger, toe; facies, ei f – face, surface, appearance, etc.). And, of course, the interpretation of lexical items with using of widely-used English words (cortex, icis m – the outer layer of an internal organ or body structure, such as the kidney or the brain).

However, sometimes the low level of language training of foreign students requires the teacher to use creative and visual ways of explaining the so-called untranslatable terms (through the use of information and communication technologies (more on their use below)), namely demonstration of objects, pictures, photos, gestures, etc. This method is quite effective, although forced, especially during the study of anatomical and clinical terminology, but more difficult when studying the module on pharmaceutical terminology and analysing the names of lexicical nouns of vocabulary, and its grammatical parameters.

Such understanding of the lexical content of terms, besides, facilitates the understanding of some of its grammatical parameters. For example, the teaching of new vocabulary usually begins with the explanation of the meaning of new lexical items. In English-speaking groups of foreign students, the teacher uses the principle of bilingualism: Latin word/term → English equivalent. However, in multicultural groups with students from different countries with different language backgrounds, due to insufficient English proficiency, the principle of trilingualism is used: along with the vocabulary of Latin terms and English translations, students make notes in their native language (Hindi, Persian, Arabic, etc.) [1].

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medicinal plants, as their choice is limited by a number of national and cultural factors, traditions of folk and domestic medicine of different countries and, finally, by various geoclimatic conditions [1]. The choice of this or that method of explanation directly depends on the features of the lexical unit itself (its form, meaning, coincidence or discrepancy with the words of the English language [5]). For example, words expressing abstract concepts cannot be semantised by means of visualisation or illustration, and words expressing concepts that are not present in the students' native language cannot be semantised by means of a one-word translation. The above methods of semanticising Latin words contribute to better learning of new vocabulary, as most English vocabulary, and especially medical terminology, is of Latin and Greek origin. However, it is necessary to note certain drawbacks associated with the unequal level of language training of foreign students, as well as the inability to use a visual method of explaining some words and terms.

Memorising lexical minimums is part of homework, and homework is a form of independent work of the student aimed at consolidating the grammatical knowledge gained during classroom lessons with the teacher. Teaching materials provide for regular grammar exercises that assist to consolidate the material learnt, while dictations with new words and an oral quiz which are forms of ongoing monitoring of learning, demonstrate low students’ motivation for learning words by heart. Sometimes a written test combined with an oral questioning during a practical lesson can help to increase students' motivation to learn new terms, which also makes it possible to determine the level of quality of foreign students’ training.

Students' motivation is also reduced by the lack of practical significance of the subject due to the status of Latin as a "dead" language that functions in the sphere of books and written texts and is acquired only in the process of formal education, which requires reforming the methodology and combining different teaching methods. Thus, the problem of teaching Latin doubles and becomes a
matter of not only methodology, but also pedagogy, as it is necessary to fight students’ stereotypes about a "non-speaking" language as unnecessary. In this regard, the teacher is faced with the task of arousing in students not only formal activity in Latin classes in order to obtain a final grade, but also a conscious cognitive and practical interest. It is for these reasons that modern didactics reveals the problem of student activity in learning and should provide an effective approach to the acquisition of knowledge based on the unity of knowledge and practice as inseparable aspects of human activity.

The method of interdisciplinary teaching has proven to be effective in enhancing students’ learning and cognitive activity in practical Latin classes. Interdisciplinary integration is aimed at deep comprehension, goal setting, design within the learning process that ensures not only interconnection but also interpenetration of individual disciplines into each other (e.g. Latin and Anatomy), which increases students’ cognitive activity and promotes more conscious learning of the material being studied. Since Latin Language is a propaedeutic discipline for the School of Medicine, it can be stated that it is directly related to many other specialized disciplines: Anatomy, Biology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacology, and Clinical disciplines, while the examples of the use of medical terminology in these disciplines stimulate interest in further learning of Latin.

One of the effective methods of supporting active work and involvement in the learning process during practical Latin classes is the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). The main ICT tool is a personal computer which provides great opportunities for using not only testing programs (tests: selective, template tests are used to determine the level of proficiency in a particular material and subject in general and help reduce the time for checking results), but also the possibility of using Internet resources, information retrieval systems, educational databases, electronic textbooks, reference books, encyclopaedias, as well as creating special cards for learning vocabulary. The latter is a priority for expanding the Latin language vocabulary for students with low proficiency in English. Used software tools can significantly contribute to the development of students’ activities in Latin classes and thus enhance their learning and cognitive activities.
vocabulary of students with low levels of English. The usage of video materials of modern popular TV programs on medical topics in English with the use of Latin terms also increases interest and encourages students to learn Latin words and phrases by heart.

In addition, a combination of passive methods with active ones, including interactive ones, assists in activating students during the practical lesson and concentrating their attention on the material, when interaction occurs not only between the teacher and students, but also between the students themselves, which contributes to a broader interaction not only with the teacher, but also with each other. In general, dividing students into small groups during classroom activities (cooperative learning) in the form of games contributes to the development of communication skills and abilities [4]. Game-based learning is one of the types of developmental learning for students and is aimed at intensifying the learning of material, the ability to analyse facts, and generally promotes creative and critical thinking of students, in addition, this method of teaching serves as an impetus for maintaining students’ interest in the learning process [2]. The experience of giving practical classes on anatomical and histological terminology showed that the highest level of memorisation, understanding and handling of various grammatical forms was observed in groups where interactive teaching methods were used, namely a relay game in which students formed medical terms stage-by-stage. The condition of the game is to divide the academic group into two teams, each of which was given cards with practical word bases and their full vocabulary forms. Students were required to take turns performing the following actions: 1) to find matches according to the “word base – word form” scheme; 2) to determine the number of declensions of nouns; 3) to form the genitive singular of words; 4) to form plural forms; 5) to combine words into terms with inconsistent meanings. This one and similar interactive exercises helped to encourage students and arouse their interest in the learning process. As a result, the level of awareness and practical skills in these groups increased significantly.
Meanwhile, the method of brainstorming, which involves coming up with creative ideas in the process of solving a particular problem, has also proved to be effective, stimulating students’ critical and creative thinking. This teaching technique is effective when used to teach clinical and pharmaceutical terminology. During the second module, clinical terminology, students are happy to complete tasks on the correct construction of a clinical term with given parameters in English. During the last module, pharmacy, students are asked to complete so-called prescription tasks: write a prescription based on a given condition that contains a minimum of information about the composition of the medicine. The students are actively involved in the learning process, coming up with ideas on how to write a prescription, selecting possible additional substances in the composition of the medicine and using certain prescription expressions. All possible options and suggestions are recorded, discussed, and the most appropriate way to write a prescription that can be used in practice is chosen.

The selection and combination of different teaching methods directly affects the motivation and interest of students as well as the level of knowledge and skills acquired by students at the end of the course. Thus, the teacher should create conditions for action, communication, and interaction that would accompany students’ self-changes [6]. Pedagogical reflection not only raises the professional level of the teacher and allows him/her to improve the discipline’s curriculum every year, but also encourages students to self-analyse their work. At the end of each practical lesson, it is recommended to use various reflection techniques. The most effective of these was the “unfinished sentence” technique ("today I learnt...", "I was interested in...", "It was difficult for me to work out...", "I performed the task...", "I realised that...", "Now I can...", "In the future I will need this knowledge for...", etc.). As a result of the reflective activity, students’ motivation and knowledge level increased. At the same time, for teachers, the use of reflection revealed a number of weaknesses in the curriculum of the course.

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"Latin Language and Fundamentals of Medical Terminology": 1) the classical approach to the distribution of third-declension nouns by type includes a list of rules that are incomprehensible to both foreign students and Ukrainian ones, and requires the search for alternative ways to determine the declension paradigm; 2) in order to explain to students the role of Latin in their further studies and future professional activities, there is a need to deepen interdisciplinary links between Latin and such disciplines as anatomy and histology, especially in the ordering of lexical minimums in accordance with the curricula of these disciplines.

Conclusions and research perspectives. It can be stated that the study of the discipline "Latin Language and Fundamentals of Medical Terminology" in English in groups of foreign students is aimed at developing linguistic thinking in future doctors, acquiring skills of correct use of professional vocabulary and fluency in medical terminology. Different levels of students’ language proficiency directly affect the speed of learning Latin and also send a challenge to the teacher to make teaching more effective, encouraging him/her to find creative and visual ways to explain terms, which requires the introduction of new teaching methods. The use of different methods in the educational process contributes to better learning of the educational material, the formation of professional and general cultural competencies necessary for a future medical specialist. The best results in mastering of the studied material and further use of medical terms in practice were observed when using the method of associative links or searching for derivatives in English, memorising words and their use through interactive exercises with the parallel use of semantisation, the method of brainstorming, which involved putting forward creative ideas in the process of solving problems, which stimulated students’ critical and creative thinking. Pedagogical reflection played an important role in improving the teaching process and learning of the material, which helped to identify a number of current problems that students face when learning Latin grammar, morphology and vocabulary, і для здобувачів вищої освіти з України, і потребує пошуку альтернативних способів визначення парадигми відмінювання; 2) задля практичного роз'яснення студентам ролі латинської мови в їх подальшому навчанні та майбутній професійній діяльності, існує потреба у поглиблених міждисциплінарних зв’язках латинської мови з такими дисциплінами, як анатомія та гістологія, а саме в упорядкованих лексичних мінімумів згідно з навчальними програмами вказаних дисциплін.

Висновки з даного дослідження і перспектив подальших розвідок. Можна констатувати, що вивчення дисципліни "Латинська мова і основи медичної термінології" англійською мовою в групах іноземних студентів спрямоване на розвиток у майбутніх лікарів лінгвістичного мислення, набуття навичок правильного використання професійної лексики та вільного опору медичною термінологією. Різний рівень мовної підготовки студентів безпосередньо впливає на швидкість вивчення латини, а також ставить перед викладачем завдання з ефективизації викладання, спонукає до пошуку креативних і наочних способів пояснення термінів, що вимагає впровадження нових методів навчання. Використання різних методів у навчальному процесі сприяє кращому засвоєнню навчального матеріалу, формуванню у студентів професійних і загальнокультурних компетенцій, необхідних майбутньому фахівцю-медику. Найкращі результати в засвоєнні вивченого матеріалу та подальшому вжитті медичних термінів на практиці спостерігаються при використанні методу асоціативних зв’язків або пошуку дериатів в англійській мові, заучування слів та їх вживання за допомогою інтерактивних вправ з паралельним використанням семантизації, методу "мозкового штурму", який передбачав висування творчих ідей у процесі розв’язування задач, що стимулювало критичне і творче мислення студентів. Не останню роль в удосконаленні процесу викладання та засвоєння матеріалу відіграла педагогічна рефлексія, за допомогою якої було виявлено ряд поточних проблем, що спіткають студентів при вивченні граматики, морфології та лексики латинської мови, а також недостатній рівень міждисциплінарних зв’язків, що вказує на потребу удосконалення
as well as the insufficient level of interdisciplinary links, which indicates the need to improve the curriculum and deepen the relationship between the propaedeutic (Latin) and special disciplines (anatomy, histology). In our article, we have only outlined a number of problems and some ways to solve them relating to teaching Latin to foreign medical students in English, which opens up prospects for further research.

REFERENCES (TRANSLATED & TRANSLITERATED)


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