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ENGLISH FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES IN UNDERGRADUATE DENTISTRY EDUCATION: COMPARING BETWEEN UKRAINE, SPAIN, AND JAPAN

According to the prognosis of D. Crystal, English language will have been holding the role of lingua franca for at least next 50 years [1, p. 203]. The recognition of English as the universal language of science has been underpinned by the combination of historical, geopolitical and economic factors, which favored English over other potential candidate languages such as Chinese, French, German, Russian, or Spanish. With the growing globalization and internationalisation, English has become a rapidly growing phenomenon in non-English speaking countries. Being a means of academic communication and a medium of university instructions, the English language poses the number of challenges for educational institutions, whose purposes are to foster and cultivate human resources who have the necessary skills to work in a competitive international arena.

At present non-native English dental professionals are facing the growing demand for good command of English due to rapidly changing and reshaping landscape of professional education and networking worldwide. For instance, many medical universities in the UE offer Programs of Dental Medicine for Master or PhD degrees with English as a language of instruction. This paper is aimed at highlighting and comparing the courses of English for Special Purposes designed in Ukraine (Poltava State Medical University, Stomatology Faculty), Spain (University of Santiago-de-Compostela, Faculty of Medicine and Odontology; the co-author, V. Kostenko was a participant of Erasmus+ Staff Exchange Program at this University), and Japan (The University of Tokushima, Faculty of Dentistry), in order to know where we are and how to raise teaching to meet the up-to-date demands. Unfortunately, Japan and Ukraine remain to be among the lowest to score in English competency tests in their regions and most Japanese and Ukrainians are still unable to communicate in English quite proficiently, ranking 55th and 44th positions [2; 3]. In Spain, the level of English proficiency is not much better, and Spain places 25th position out of a total of 33 European countries and 34th in the world [3].

Taking into the account fact that English for Special Purposes (ESP) is a matter of approach to language teaching aiming to meet the needs of a special group of learners in professional settings, it means that much work done by ESP teachers is addressed to designing appropriate courses for various groups of learners [4]. to build an effective ESP course, five key stages should be considered and implemented: 1) needs analysis, 2) course design, 3) teaching and learning, 4) assessment, and 5) evaluation [5; 6]. Moreover, the designing of the ESP implies team work involving experts on the field in which the ESP course is being designed. Those experts will provide key information about relevant issues such as: discourse features directly related to the discipline, special norms and customs, which come to text and information structure, genres of the professional community, i. e. format, or text type, or speech-organizing model in terms of discipline, context of situation, content, text structure and language, as well

as knowledge interests and trends. on the other hand, this cooperation helps English teachers to understand basic concepts and technical details.

The English courses for dental students are variously known in these three educational institutions as Foreign Language (English) for Professional Purposes (Dentistry) in Ukraine, Technical English for Dentistry in Spain, and English for Dental Medicine (Japan). These courses are considered within the frame of language teaching / learning and designed to meet the similar objectives as teaching dental terminology and dental technical vocabulary, and presenting conversational situations commonly used in the dental setting. Through these courses students are introduced to dental terminology by learning how to interpret commonly used dental terms, abbreviations, and symbols; students also develop an understanding of basic dental anatomy (topics «Head», «Oral cavity» («Oral anatomy»), «Tooth anatomy», «Types of teeth» (Structure and types of teeth) and understand the principles of the etymology of dental terms. An emphasis is placed on the clinical environment of the dental practice and typically focused on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of the commonest dental diseases and conditions; medical emergency response, and infection prevention and control. In Japan, for instance, students are also taught how to operate with fee codes, dental charting, to do some dental records [7]. As communication in medical settings is central to assessing patient needs, providing or requesting information, interacting with team members, an attention is also paid to promoting dentist-patient and inter/intra-professional communication training.

On successful completion of the course, students are expected to be able to recognize professional terminology in different types of texts; describe basic phenomena in the main fields of dentistry using professional terminology in English; summarize the information from any kind of source in written and spoken language using relevant terminology in English; retell the general idea and specific information in different kinds of texts from varied types of sources; select and apply appropriate terminology, language devices, and genres in English for oral or written communication (making oral reports, conference poster presentation, summaries, e-mails, memos).

The courses are compulsory in all three Universities and designed for students, whose English language skills roughly corresponding to B1 lower level according to the Common European Framework of Reference list for Languages at the entry level in order to help them to reach B1 upper or B2 level.

Though the courses in those three universities share much in common in terms of general and specific instructional purposes and tasks, they are somewhat different in a number of characteristics given in Table 1.

Table 1 – Characteristics of the English course syllabi for dental students at the Universities of Ukraine, Spain, and Japan

№ п/п	The English course for dental students, University	Year, semester	Class duration (min)	Credits	Teacher's Background
1	Foreign Language (English) for Professional Purposes (Dentistry), Poltava State Medical University, Ukraine	1 st year, II semester	80	3	Linguists
2	Technical English for Dentistry, University of Santiago-de-Compostela, Spain	1 st year, II semester	90	3	Linguists
3	English for Dental Medicine, The University of Tokushima, Japan.	3 rd year, II semester	60	3	Dentists

The dental students at the universities studied are offered the preceding elective course of English for General Purposes, and most of the students in Poltava State Medical University and the University of Tokushima usually take this course, while in Spain only about 60 % of students use this opportunity before starting the course of English for Dentistry. We consider it would be more feasible to offer this course at upper year level because the 1st year students have no sufficient background in basic dentistry, no knowledge about professional discourse community codes and experience some difficulties struggling through the new complex content in a foreign language.

The professional background of the language instructors is also one of disputable issues: ideally, ESP is best taught by someone who combines disciplinary expertise and language teaching experience, however, this issue is hard to solve in practice, therefore, some schools have dentists, whereas other schools have language specialists, teachers with different backgrounds. Thus, it is essential to develop the best approaches in providing language instruction and content instruction, to elaborate up-to-date context-specific materials and methodologies.

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