

MEDICAL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE NEEDS : INTEGRATING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACHES INTO TERMINOLOGY INSTRUCTION

Butunbayeva Aziza Sayfullo qizi

Tayanch doktorant

E-mail: abutunbaeva92@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22843616>

Received: 13 September 2026 • Accepted: 18 September 2026 • Published: 19 September 2026

Abstract

This article examines the language requirements of medical students learning English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and assesses how effectively communicative teaching strategies facilitate medical terminology acquisition. Drawing on data from 203 first-year General Medicine students and language instructors across Samarkand State Medical University, Tashkent State Medical University, and Andijan State Medical Institute, the study used a three-tier experimental design (diagnostic, formative, and evaluative) alongside targeted survey questionnaires. The findings indicate that 77% of participants view communicative instruction as vital for terminology learning, with 36.95% reporting that active communication and practical application yield the highest retention rates.

Keywords:

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), Needs Analysis, Communicative Language Teaching, Medical Terminology, Clinical Case Studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

English currently functions as the global *lingua franca* across medical science, clinical practice, and research dissemination. Because most contemporary medical literature, high-impact journals, and clinical guidelines are published in English, future healthcare professionals require proficiency in specialized English for Medical Purposes (EMP) rather than general English language skills. In non-English-medium higher education contexts, establishing targeted language instruction is essential to help students navigate specialized literature and participate in global professional discourse. Designing these courses effectively requires a comprehensive needs analysis alongside the systematic implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Theoretical Foundations

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) centers on the academic and professional demands of learners. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) and Nunan (2004) define ESP as an educational approach tailored directly to the goals, domain requirements, and professional contexts of students. Otilia (2015) highlights two defining features of ESP: contextual alignment and a direct focus on professional competencies. Unlike General English, ESP syllabi and instructional methodologies derive from systematic pre-course needs analyses (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Basturkmen, 2006). In medical education, the central role of English led to the development of EMP as a specialized discipline within ESP (Kayaoğlu & Akbaş, 2016). Master (2005) emphasizes that EMP aims to build practical communicative competence among prospective medical personnel. Building on this, Benbouya (2026) demonstrates that fostering micro-skills—such as

medical listening comprehension, case presentation, and note-taking from academic texts—through communicative tasks directly enhances learning outcomes.

This study investigates the language needs of first-year medical undergraduates and evaluates a communicative, linguodidactic framework designed for teaching medical terminology.

2. METHODS

Design and Methodology

We adopted a mixed-methods experimental design combining qualitative perspectives with quantitative measures. The practical intervention unfolded in three distinct phases:

1. Diagnostic Phase: Establishing baseline measures of students' ability to comprehend, define, and contextualize medical terms in communication.
2. Formative Phase: Introducing communicative learning modules—including doctor–patient consultations, peer discussions, case histories, and simulation exercises—into regular coursework.
3. Evaluative Phase: Measuring knowledge gains through post-intervention assessments, clinical task solving, and targeted interviews.

Participants: The study sample comprised 203 first-year General Medicine undergraduates and their language instructors across three medical institutions in Uzbekistan: Samarkand State Medical University (SamSMU): 70 participants (34.48%) ;Tashkent State Medical University (TSMU): 65 participants (32.02%) ; Andijan State Medical Institute (ASMI): 68 participants (33.50%) .Data gathered through validated survey instruments were processed using standard descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages).

3. RESULTS

The practical experiment and survey results made it possible to determine the attitudes of instructors and students toward the communicative approach, as well as their needs regarding language skills.

1. Necessity and Classroom Practice of the Communicative Approach

According to the survey conducted among instructors and students, the majority of respondents (77%) evaluated teaching medical terminology based on the communicative approach as necessary.

Table 2. Necessity and Classroom Practice of the Communicative Approach

Questions and Response Options	SamSMU (70)	TSMU (65)	ASMI (68)	Total (203)	Percentage (%)
I. Necessity of Communicative Teaching:					
- Highly necessary	24	22	24	70	34.48%
- Necessary	30	28	29	87	42.86%
- Partially necessary	12	11	11	34	16.75%
- Not necessary	4	4	4	12	5.91%

Questions and Response Options	SamSMU (70)	TSMU (65)	ASMI (68)	Total (203)	Percentage (%)
II. Level of Class-room Implementation:					
- Always	18	16	18	52	25.62%
- Frequently	24	23	25	72	35.47%
- Sometimes	21	19	18	58	28.57%
- Rarely / Almost never	7	7	7	21	10.34%

The results indicate that while communicative tasks are applied to a certain extent (61%), 39% of responses signify a need for systematic linguodidactic support in this direction.

2. Analysis of Effective Activity and Exercise Types

It was found that activity types contextualized closely to authentic communicative situations hold priority in acquiring medical terminology.

Table 3. Effective Activity and Exercise Types in Teaching Medical Terminology

Activity and Exercise Types	Total (203)	Percentage (%)
Activity Types (Instructor Evaluation):		
- Doctor-patient dialogues	62	30.54%
- Working with clinical cases	59	29.06%
- Role-plays and simulations	45	22.17%
- Terminological explanation exercises	37	18.23%
Exercise Types (Student Evaluation):		
- Practical conversation and role-playing	71	34.98%
- Multimedia-based tasks	50	24.63%
- Group and pair work	45	22.17%
- Text translation and vocabulary work	37	18.23%

3. Student Language Skills and Learning Methods

Students' self-evaluations of their language skills and their preferred methods for learning terminology were analyzed.

Table 4. Dominant Language Skills and Terminology Learning Methods of Students

Indicators and Options	SamSMU	TSMU	ASMI	Total (203)	Percentage (%)
Dominant Language Skill:					
- Speaking	20	18	19	57	28.08%
- Reading	19	17	18	54	26.60%
- Listening	18	17	18	53	26.11%
- Writing	13	13	13	39	19.21%
Terminology Learning Method:					
- Using terms in conversation & practical exercises	26	24	25	75	36.95%
- Memorizing via translation	22	20	21	63	31.03%
- Learning from textbooks and articles	17	16	17	50	24.63%
- Other methods	5	5	5	15	7.39%

4. Learning Materials, Teacher's Role, and Assessment Criteria

In the resource analysis, 83.25% (169 respondents) indicated textbooks and 77.83% (158 respondents) indicated handouts as primary sources. Audio/video resources were utilized in 69.95% (142 respondents), presentations (PPT) in 67.00% (136 respondents), and e-books in 59.61% (121 respondents) of cases. Additionally, 68.47% of students (139 respondents) considered learning terminology through conversation and role-plays completely effective.

Regarding the instructor's role as a facilitator, explaining terms in context (84.24% / 171 respondents) and creating communicative situations (80.79% / 164 respondents) took leading positions. Among assessment forms, situational dialogues (85.22% / 173 respondents) and clinical case analysis (81.77% / 166 respondents) recorded the highest effectiveness ratings.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm a high demand for communication-based linguodidactic models over traditional translation methods in teaching English and medical terminology to medical students.

In our study, 28.08% of respondents identified speaking and 26.60% identified reading as their dominant skills, while 36.95% preferred learning terms through direct application in practical communication. This parameter aligns closely with the study conducted by Benbouya (2026) at an Algerian university, where 42.86% of medical students cited speaking as the most crucial macro-skill.

Similarly, Rinawati et al. (2022) and Miščin (2018) identified in their research that medical students feel the greatest need for English when delivering oral presentations, conducting doctor-patient communication, and reading medical literature. The fact that doctor-patient

dialogues (30.54%) and clinical cases (29.06%) were recognized as the most effective tools in our results supports the findings of Kayaoğlu and Akbaş (2016) as well as Çelik (2018).

Notably, 31.03% of students still rely on the "memorization via translation" method. This indicates that the influence of the traditional grammar-translation method persists in the educational process. However, since 77% of respondents consider the communicative approach necessary, it demonstrates the necessity of transitioning toward interactive, contextual, and simulation-based tasks.

5. CONCLUSION

English is not merely a general education subject for medical students, but a primary tool for acquiring domain-specific information and conducting professional communication. Experimental work and survey analysis revealed that memorizing medical terms in isolation as vocabulary lists does not yield expected results. Integrating them into communicative situations—such as doctor–patient dialogues, clinical cases, and role-plays—significantly increases acquisition efficiency. In teaching and assessment frameworks, the role of the instructor should shift from a simple transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator who creates a communicative environment.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

1. Basturkmen, H. (2006). Ideas and options in English for specific purposes. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
2. Benbouya, A. (2026). Needs analysis of English for medical purposes: Students' perceptions. *Algerian Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, 10(1), 649–660.
3. Çelik, H. (2018). Perceived language needs of undergraduate medical students enrolled in a consecutively running ESP course. In *Positioning English for specific purposes in an English language teaching context* (pp. 71–85).
4. Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in ESP: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Kayaoğlu, M. N., & Akbaş, R. D. (2016). An investigation into medical students' English language needs. *Participatory Educational Research*, 2016(Special Issue I), 63–71.
7. Master, P. (2005). Research in English for specific purposes. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 99–115). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
8. Miščin, E. (2018). Needs analysis of students of financial and medical English. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of the Croatian Society for Applied Linguistics*, Rijeka.
9. Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
10. Otilia, S. M. (2015). Needs analysis in English for specific purposes. *Academica Brâncuși, Economy Series*, 1(2), 54–55.
11. Rinawati, R., Trisnadi, S., & Murwantono, D. (2022). Needs analysis of English for medical purposes: A student perspective. *LANGUAGE CIRCLE: Journal of Language and Literature*, 16(2), 348–356.
12. Wahyuni, S. (2021). English language needs for medical students: A link and match of academic and professional career. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 5(1), 169–184.