

LINGUOPRAMATIC AND INTERCULTURAL APPROACH OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO MEDICAL STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY

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Abstract:

In the context of globalization and international academic mobility, medical students are increasingly required to function effectively in diverse cultural and linguistic settings. For this reason, this paper presents a linguo-pragmatic and intercultural approach to foreign language teaching that is tailored to medical students. The approach focuses on developing not only linguistic proficiency but also pragmatic and intercultural competence - skills that are critical for communication in medical practice across different cultures. Moreover, the article discusses the theoretical underpinnings, pedagogical strategies, and practical implications of this approach for improving medical students' readiness for international collaboration.

Key words: linguo-pragmatic, medical students, intercultural approach, mobility, healthcare communication.

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The rapid expansion of international academic mobility programs has created new opportunities for medical students to study and work in various countries, gaining exposure to different healthcare systems and cultures. However, this shift also presents challenges, particularly in terms of communication. Medical professionals must not only be proficient in a foreign language but also possess the pragmatic and intercultural skills necessary for interacting with patients and colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds [2].

This article outlines a linguo-pragmatic and intercultural approach to teaching foreign languages to medical students. This approach is designed to address the specific linguistic and cultural needs of medical students, helping them navigate complex communicative situations in an international context. By integrating pragmatic language use with intercultural sensitivity, educators can better prepare students for the demands of global medical practice.

The linguo-pragmatic approach centers on the use of language in real-world, context-driven communication. For medical students, this involves mastering the nuances of medical discourse, including how to interact with patients, families, and healthcare professionals in ways that are both culturally and professionally appropriate. Key components of the linguo-pragmatic approach include:

Contextualized Language Learning: Medical students must learn language within the specific contexts of healthcare interactions. This includes understanding

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how medical terminology is used in different situations, such as consultations, diagnoses, and patient education.

Speech Acts in Medicine: In healthcare settings, speech acts (e.g., giving instructions, asking questions, expressing empathy) are essential. Teaching students how to perform these speech acts appropriately in a foreign language requires attention to both linguistic forms and cultural norms.

Nonverbal Communication: In many medical contexts, nonverbal communication (such as body language, eye contact, and physical proximity) plays a significant role. The linguo-pragmatic approach emphasizes teaching students how to interpret and use nonverbal cues effectively in different cultural settings.

In addition to linguistic proficiency, medical students must be equipped with intercultural competence. Intercultural communication skills are critical for understanding and managing the cultural differences that can affect patient care. The intercultural approach focuses on:

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Medical students need to develop an understanding of how cultural factors influence health beliefs, communication styles, and patient behavior. This includes recognizing cultural differences in approaches to illness, treatment, and patient-doctor relationships.

Culturally Adapted Communication: Teaching students to adapt their communication style to suit the cultural background of their patients is essential for providing effective care. This includes not only language adaptation but also adjusting for differences in values, social norms, and healthcare expectations.

Ethical Considerations in Intercultural Contexts: Ethical issues, such as patient autonomy, informed consent, and confidentiality, may be interpreted differently in various cultures. Educating students on how to navigate these ethical challenges in a culturally sensitive manner is a key component of the intercultural approach [1].

The increasing mobility of medical students - through exchange programs, internships, and international collaborations - makes the integration of linguo-pragmatic and intercultural approaches even more relevant. In foreign healthcare systems, students encounter new languages and cultural norms, which can create communication barriers. Addressing these challenges requires targeted language instruction that prepares students for the following:

Adaptability in Diverse Settings: Students must be able to adapt quickly to different cultural and healthcare environments. Language courses that focus on both the pragmatics of medical communication and intercultural competence will better equip them for success in international settings.

Enhanced Patient Interaction: In international mobility programs, students often work directly with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Effective communication in these interactions is critical, not only for gathering accurate patient information but also for building trust and rapport.

Global Health Collaboration: Medical professionals increasingly engage in global health initiatives, which require effective cross-cultural collaboration. Foreign language education that integrates pragmatics and intercultural sensitivity will help future healthcare workers collaborate more effectively with international teams [4].

Implementing a linguo-pragmatic and intercultural approach in medical language education requires specific pedagogical strategies. The following methods

are designed to enhance both the linguistic and intercultural skills of medical students [1]:

Case-Based Learning: Use of real-life medical cases from diverse cultural contexts helps students apply language and intercultural skills in practical scenarios. This method allows students to explore how cultural factors influence medical communication and decision-making.

Simulation and Role-Play: Simulated patient interactions and role-playing exercises provide students with opportunities to practice both linguistic and intercultural communication skills in a controlled environment. These activities can simulate situations such as delivering bad news, explaining medical procedures, or obtaining informed consent from patients with different cultural backgrounds.

Collaborative Learning: Pairing or grouping students from different cultural backgrounds encourages intercultural dialogue and promotes the exchange of cultural knowledge. Collaborative projects that require students to solve medical problems in an international context can also foster intercultural competence [2].

Reflective Journals: Encouraging students to reflect on their experiences with intercultural communication in healthcare settings allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural factors that affect patient care. Reflection also helps students recognize their own cultural biases and improve their communication skills.

To effectively implement a linguopragmatic and intercultural approach, medical education programs must adjust their language curricula to reflect the complexities of communication in global healthcare contexts. Key recommendations for curriculum design include:

Integration of Linguistic and Cultural Content: Language courses should integrate linguistic and cultural content rather than teaching them separately. For example, medical terminology can be taught alongside cultural norms for patient-doctor interaction in specific regions.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Language teachers should collaborate with medical professionals, cultural studies experts, and ethicists to design courses that address the intersection of language, culture, and healthcare ethics.

Continuous Assessment: Assessment of students should focus not only on language proficiency but also on their ability to use language pragmatically and demonstrate intercultural competence in medical settings. This can be done through oral exams, role-play evaluations, and written reflections [3].

In an era of increasing international academic mobility, medical students must be equipped with both linguistic and intercultural competence to navigate the complexities of global healthcare communication. The linguopragmatic and intercultural approach to teaching foreign languages provides a comprehensive framework for preparing medical students to communicate effectively in diverse cultural contexts. By integrating these approaches into medical language education, we can ensure that future healthcare professionals are better prepared for the challenges of international medical practice.

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