

Investigating the Factors of Adult Learning in Vocationally Oriented Foreign Language Programs

Olga V. Maslova^a, ^aCandidate of Philology, teacher of English of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, Russia. Email: olgamaslovadeni2011@yandex.ru

This paper focuses on teaching adults – as a specific age and psychological group of students – a foreign language in higher education. The aim is to determine how motivation (including the awareness of purposes) and individual learning styles combine with a set of social factors (age, educational level, and language proficiency) and influence an efficient language acquisition in higher education by non-linguistic students. The participants are 417 students of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Russia) who were divided into 5 groups: 1) 107 first-year junior, 2) 105 fourth-year, 3) 107 fifth-year senior undergraduate, 4) 50 first-year and 5) 48 second-year Masters postgraduate medical students. The data include the results of the students survey on: 1) the goals, 2) preferred types of classroom activity, 3) ways of a language learning and 4) efficiency of the methods used in educational process. The obtained indications serve as the background for modelling specific language programs for the surveyed students.

Key words: *An individual learning style, a language-learning goal, A type of classroom activity, A type of a language learner, An individual foreign language program.*

Introduction

One of the 21st century urgent needs is the mastering of a foreign language by a highly qualified non-linguistic specialist, and his or her willingness to carry out professional intercultural communication.

Today, knowledge of foreign languages is necessary for every person to effectively solve communicative tasks both in situations of interpersonal communication and in situations of professional and business communication. It is obviously not accidental, since with

continuous integration of world sciences and technologies the problem of international communication is becoming ever more relevant. Therefore, the requests for specialists with certain levels of a foreign language competence are permanently growing. And a modern specialist should be able to not only communicate with foreign partners, but also master the skills of intercultural communication with representatives of other nations.

The above problems set a major objective in modern vocational education (especially, at the tertiary level) – to search the efficient ways of mastering a language by specialists of various fields at that level to establish and maintain relationships between different language cultures. As a rule, the learners of that group are adult, which makes another problem more actual – to improve the methods and technologies of teaching adults foreign languages in accordance with continually changing requirements of a job market.

As theoretical research shows, during the 20th century, many US and European teachers and educational researchers (Richterich, 1972; Munby, 1978; Robinson, 1980; Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, etc.) identified a learner's concrete needs and goals as the basic factors for creating adults' educational process in the study of a foreign language for specific (vocational) purposes. In this regard, some of the mentioned above authors – Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) – considering English for specific purposes (ESP) note: 'ESP is based on an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative needs arising from these purposes' (Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984).

Apart from the presented above factors, we need to mention another important component of the teaching process – the use of an individual learning style. Note, the problem of a style has been studied by many educational researchers (Witkin & Asch, 1948; Myer-Briggs, 1962; Kolb, 1976, 2005; Dunn & Price, 1978; Claxton & Murrell, 1987; Reid, 1987, 1995; Fleming & Mills, 1992; Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Oxford, 1993; Brown, 2000; Holodnaya, 2004; Salvisberg, 2005; Kornilova & Paramey, 2016, etc.).

According to one of the mentioned authors – Reid (1995) – we shall define the above mentioned concept as following: 'The learning style is an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills' (Reid, 1995 : 58). Another author – Salvisberg (2005) – adds 'educational context': 'a learning style is an individual's cognitive style (i.e. link between cognition and personality) within an educational context...' (Salvisberg, 2005).

Based on the given definitions, we can describe a learning style as an individual's persistent feature which determines a way he or she perceives, processes, analyses, memorises information and makes sense of it, or acquires a new skill in learning process.

All the studied researchers suggest various classifications of learning styles. The most common ones may be differentiated in the following ways:

- An amount of information a person is able to perceive and memorise: '*field-independence*' and '*field-dependence*' (Witkin & Asch, 1948; Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Brown, 2000; Holodnaya, 2004; Kornilova & Paramey, 2016, etc.) or, otherwise, called '*analytical*' and '*global*' (Dunn & Price, 1978; Reid, 1995, etc.) learning styles. The former style characterizes those learners who focus on the details of a given information (e.g., separate words or grammar rules in a language); conversely, the learners of the latter style tend to concentrate on the 'whole' information (e.g., a situational dialogue or the context of a described object, situation, etc.). In comparison of the two styles, the above cited authors agree that the former learners better memorise information divided into a set of blocks; whereas the latter learners excel in catching the gist of a received information, with detailed analysis of it to follow.
- A way a person is able to analyse information and conclude: '*sensing*' and '*intuitive*' (Myers-Briggs, 1962), otherwise, called as '*concrete*' and '*abstract*' (Kolb, 2005) learning styles. The difference between the mentioned types of styles is that learners of the former style tend to solve tasks or make conclusions on an established plan or model as well as by their previously received experience, while learners of the latter style better find decisions under the circumstances of a given situation. Therefore, the former learners are supposed to be less adaptive to new circumstances than the latter ones who are more inclined to change their tasks and teaching conditions.
- A type of personality: '*extroversion*' and '*introversion*' (Myers-Briggs, 1962; Oxford, 1993). As research shows, the learners of the former type are more oriented on a group work, as opposed to the learners of the latter type who prefer to learn alone.
- A sensory way a person predominantly perceives and memorises information: '*visual*' (through written texts, pictures, video means, etc.), '*auditory*' (by listening and speaking) and '*tactile*' (by touching) or '*kinesthetic*' (through movement) learning styles (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992; Oxford, 1993, Salvisberg, 2005). According to the cited authors, we can assume that the most appropriate ways of learning for the learners of the last two mentioned styles are those combining all the possible receptors, as well as – types of activity: reading, listening, watching, speaking, writing, depicting, including those types of lessons which are closely related to real life situations, such as: role playing, group discussions, excursions, making objects, etc.
- The tempo in which a person is able to analyse information and conclude: '*impulsiveness*' and '*reflexivity*' (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Reid, 1995; Holodnaya,

2004; Salvisberg, 2005; Kornilova & Paramey, 2016]. Our observation shows that the former learners tend to promptly make decisions as well as conclusions, which contrasts with the latter learners who prefer to carefully think over a given problem and all the ways of its possible solution before making decision.

Certainly, we should not consider the described above learning styles as unique and unchangeable. The studied research literature presents many other types of learning styles in the given ways. Practice shows that an individual learning style is to some degree dependent on certain social factors, such as: learner's age, cultural and educational background as well as level of proficiency and previous experience of learning a certain subject (particularly, a foreign language being studied).

The presented research is aimed to determine how motivation (including the awareness of purposes) and individual learning styles combined with a set of social factors (age, educational level, and language proficiency) influence an efficient acquisition of a foreign language by higher education non-linguistic students.

To achieve the established aim we conducted an experimental work with students of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, in Russia, who were divided into 5 major groups: 1) the first-year junior, 2) forth-year, 3) fifth-year senior undergraduate, 4) first-year and 5) second-year Masters postgraduate medical students. Their studied language was English.

In our experiment we solved a set of objectives, such as:

- To make diagnostic investigations of the above mentioned groups of students in order to find out their backgrounds in the target (English) language (a level of proficiency and individual learning styles) – as well as goals being conscious of in the studied language – at different stages of the tertiary medical course;
- Based on the obtained results, to determine the teaching means and methods appropriate to individual students and integrate them into group learning;
- To assess the effectiveness of the methods used by students in the language learning.

To begin our study, it is necessary to present the general language syllabus set up at all the levels of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University course which looks as following (Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, 2016):

- **In the 1st undergraduate year:** 52 hours of classroom lessons in the basic medical language course (including the study of grammar and professional lexis);

- **In the 2nd undergraduate year:** 32 hours of online course in written professional communication (including Medical translation);
- **In the 3rd undergraduate year:** 40 hours of online course in oral professional communication;
- **In the 4th undergraduate year:** 120 hours of classroom lessons and 54 hours of online course in oral and written professional communication;
- **In the 5th undergraduate year:** 84 hours of classroom lessons and 41 hours of online course in oral and written scientific communication;
- **In the 6th undergraduate year:** 14 hours of online course in written scientific communication;
- **In the 1st postgraduate year of the Masters course:** 136 hours of classroom lessons and 104 hours of online course in oral and written scientific communication;
- **In the 2nd postgraduate year of the Masters course:** 136 hours of classroom lessons and 104 hours of online course in oral and written scientific communication.

Materials and Methods

As the basic method, we used a questionnaire conducted as a survey in two stages: first, at the beginning and, second, at the end of each researched (junior, senior undergraduate and postgraduate) stage of the University course.

For the experiment we selected, in total, 417 students of the classroom language lessons who were referred to such groups as: 1) 107 first-year junior undergraduate students, aged from 17 to 20 years old; 2) 105 fourth-year senior undergraduate students, aged from 20 to 26 years old; 3) 107 fifth-year senior undergraduate students, aged from 21 to 30 years old; 4) 50 first-year Masters postgraduate students, aged from 22 to 50 years old and 5) 48 second-year Masters postgraduate students, aged from 22 to 55 years old.

The students' language learning styles were assessed in such criteria as: 1) a predominant way of sensory perception (visual or audial) of a given material and 2) the preferred ways of learning the language (practice of grammar, drilling words and texts, analysing written texts, listening to oral speech, training oral and written communication).

A part of our questions of the first stage concerned the following data: 1) students' personal characteristics (names, ages, a year of study, language being studied), 2) goals of learning the target language and 3) choices of a type of classroom activity (in pairs, groups or independently). In addition to the given above questions, we suggested to the respondents to evaluate (from 4 to 0 points) how well available (or preferred) to them the following ways of a language learning are: 1) studying rules and performing exercises; 2) analysing the content of texts; 3) conversations on different topics; 4) writing works (essays, reports, etc.); 5)

repetition and drilling materials (words, texts); 6) reading and playing dialogues; 7) independent modeling of dialogues or monologues in presented communicative situations; 8) listening to oral speech; 9) memorising materials presented in written, oral, visual (figures, tables, charts, video resources) forms or in gaming activities.

By the choice of ways and means of learning, we identified the following types of language learners met among the students of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University: the learners: 1) based on concrete facts (drilling words and reproducing exemplary texts or dialogues) with a use of visual or oral means as well as gaming activities, 2) in communication (in conversations on different topics, modeling dialogues or monologues in presented communicative situations, listening to oral speech and memorising material by ear) and 3) in analytical ways (studying the rules and doing exercises, writing works, analysing texts and memorising material presented in written form).

The obtained results (including the students' preferred types of classroom activity) served us as the background for modeling specific learning programs (selection of proper material, methods and classroom activities) to achieve the needed language skills by the future medical specialists.

At the second stage of our survey we questioned the students about how efficient they estimated the methods used in the educational process to acquire the necessary skills to be. A number of other methods used in our research included experimental teaching and observation of the given results.

The Results of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University Students Survey in Language Learning

By the overall number of responses given to the question on the goals of the target language learning, we can draw the following conclusions.

The goal of understanding professional texts is of a fairly high percentage among all the surveyed groups of students : (a) 43% of group 1,(b) 81% of group 2, (c) 79% of group 3, (d) 68% of group 4 and (e) 60% of group 5.

According to the other data received, approximately, 33-35% of group 1, 13-63% of group 2, 20-68% of group 3, 21-37% of group 4 and 18-55% of group 5 found it important to Masters communicative skills in a foreign language for the following professional areas: first, in communication to foreign patients and, second, in scientific and business areas (conferences and seminars) to exchange professional experience with foreign specialists.

The highest percentage of those who intend to perform at international scientific conferences and seminars can be observed among the students of group 5 (45%). With a decreasing number of responses, they are followed by the students of groups 4 (32%), 3 (30%), 2 (28%) and 1 (14%).

The idea of passing an advanced professional training abroad mostly occurs among the students of group 1 (30%), followed by the students of group 5 (23%) and group 4 (11%). The lowest results are observed in groups 2 and 3 (6%).

Some other results show that a greater number of the first-year undergraduates (13%) and postgraduates (16%) consider a prospect of working abroad, which contrasts to the number of responses presented by the senior undergraduates (6% of both the fourth and fifth-years) and second-year postgraduates (11%). The goal of scientific publications in foreign sources is more popular among the senior undergraduates (13% of groups both 2 and 3) and postgraduates (11% of group 4 and 15% of group 5), in comparison with the junior undergraduates who gave no respond in this regard.

The lowest levels in all the surveyed groups are referred to the response of learning a language for self-education: 2% in group 1, 6% in group 2, 3% in group 3, 5% in group 4 and 0% in group 5.

The prospect of training foreign specialists is considered by the responses of group 1 (2%), only, with no response given by the rest.

And most importantly, 8% of group 1 found it difficult to answer why they need to know a foreign language. In addition, 2% of the mentioned group consider that medical specialists do not need foreign languages. The students of the other groups described did not note the uselessness of a foreign language in any way; on the contrary, foreign languages represent a great prospect for advanced training abroad, creating articles and other works that will later have a beneficial effect on their careers.

The total number of the language learning goals noted by the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Quantitative ratios of language learning goals noted by the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students, presented in (%)

Goals for learning the target language	Group 1 junior (1 st year) undergraduate students (aged from 17 to 20 years old)	Group 2 senior (4 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 20 to 26 years old)	Group 3 senior (5 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 21 to 30 years old)	Group 4 postgraduate students (of the 1 st year of Masters course) (aged from 22 to 50 years old)	Group 5 postgraduate students (of the 2 nd year of Masters course) (aged from 23 to 40 years old)
Understanding professional texts	43%	81%	79%	68%	60%
Communication to foreign specialists	35%	63%	68%	37%	55%
Communication to foreign patients	33%	13%	20%	21%	18%
Advanced professional training abroad	30%	6%	6%	11%	23%
Performance at international scientific conferences or seminars	14%	28%	30%	32	45%
Work abroad	13%	6%	3%	16%	11%
Scientific publications in foreign sources	0	13%	13%	11%	15%
Difficult to give an answer	8%	5%	3%	3%	0
Self-education	2%	6%	3%	5%	0
Training foreign specialists	2%	0	0	0	0
Medical specialists do not need foreign languages	2%	0	0	0	0



In relation to another question concerning the students' choices of a type of the classroom activity, we received such results as: most of the students of each described group (38% of both 1 and 2, 34% of 3, 60% of 4 and 62% of 5) tended to learn the language alone. The highest percentage of them falls in group 5.

Some other given results show that a great number of the junior students (29%) prefer to study in a group, and 16% of the others of the mentioned group prefer all the proposed forms of learning: in a pair, group and self-study. It is contrary to the indicators presented by the senior and postgraduate students: among the students of group 2, 9% prefer a pair work combined with a self-study, and 6% tend to study in a group, pair and alone; in group 3 10% students tend to study in a group, 4% – in a pair, group and self-study; in group 4 15% – in a group, 4% – in a pair, group and self-study, 1% – in a pair and self-study and in group 5 13% – in a group, 2% – in a group, pair and self-study. In addition, the lowest indicators received from the students of groups 1, 3, 4 and 5 refer to the pair learning combined with a self-study.

The above cited results give us a certain picture of the students' language proficiencies – manifested by their abilities of independent learning – at different stages of studies. As the data show, the older students are becoming, the more skills of a self-study they are acquiring. In addition to the presented form of learning, a great number of the respondents tend to Master the target language in groups (including pair learning and self-study).

In total, the types of the language classroom activity chosen by the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students are given in table 2.

Table 2: Quantitative ratios of types of the language classroom activity chosen by the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students, presented in (%)

Types of classroom activity	Group 1 junior (1 st year) undergraduate students (aged from 17 to 20 years old)	Group 2 senior (4 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 20 to 26 years old)	Group 3 senior (5 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 21 to 30 years old)	Group 4 postgraduate students (of the 1 st year of Masters course) (aged from 22 to 50 years old)	Group 5 postgraduate students (of the 2nd year of Masters course) (aged from 23 to 40 years old)
Self-study	38%	38%	34%	60%	62%
Group learning	29%	6%	10%	15%	15%
Pair, group learning and self-study	16%	6%	4%	4%	2%
Pair learning and self-study	3%	9%	3%	1%	2%

According to the types of language learners discovered among the surveyed students, we can draw the following conclusions:

Most of the junior undergraduates (43%) tend to learn through concrete facts (by drilling words and reproducing exemplary texts, dialogues) supplemented by visual means as well as in gaming activities. In turn, most of the senior undergraduates (47% of group 2 and 50% of group 3) are referred to as analytical learners who better acquire the target language in the following ways: studying the rules and doing exercises or tests, analysing written texts, writing works and memorising material presented in written form. And the highest percentages of the postgraduate students (37% of group 4 and 40% of group 5) tend to learn the language in the process of communication (in conversations on different topics, modeling dialogues or monologues in certain communicative situations, listening to oral speech and memorising material by ear).



To the described above data we should add some other important results:

In group 1 34% students prefer the communicative way and 29% – analytical way of learning the language.

In group 2 34% students learn through concrete facts and 19% – in the communicative way.

In group 3 30% students learn through concrete facts and 24% – in the communicative way.

In group 4 32% students lean through concrete facts and 21% – in the analytical way.

In group 5 36% students prefer to learn in the analytical way and 31% – through concrete facts.

In total, the types of language learners found among the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students are given in table 3.

Table 3: Quantitative ratios of the types of language learners found among the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students, presented in (%)

Types of language learners	Group 1 junior (1 st year) undergraduate students (aged from 17 to 20 years old)	Group 2 senior (4 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 20 to 26 years old)	Group 3 senior (5 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 21 to 30 years old)	Group 4 postgraduate students (of the 1 st year of Masters course) (aged from 22 to 50 years old)	Group 5 postgraduate students (of the 2 nd year of Masters course) (aged from 23 to 40 years old)
Learners based on concrete facts (drilling words and reproducing exemplary texts or dialogues) with a use of visual means as well as gaming activities	43%	34%	30%	32%	31%
Learners in communication (in conversations on different topics, independent modelling of dialogues or monologues in presented communicative situations, listening to oral speech and memorising material by ear)	34%	19%	24%	37%	40%
Learners in analytical way (studying the rules and doing exercises, writing works, analysing texts and memorising material presented in written form)	29%	47%	50%	21%	36%

Based on the students' initial learning styles at each of the surveyed levels of the tertiary medical course, we selected the appropriate methods (as well as means) of the language learning: grammatical translation, repetition and drilling (with a use of both visual and audial means), analysis of texts, training communicative skills (dialogues or monologues) based on key words and phrases, project method (making reports, abstracts, etc.), spontaneous communication on the studied topics. The efficiency of the applied methods is demonstrated in the following results presented by our respondents.

Most of the first-year junior and fourth-year senior undergraduates found it better to acquire the language by repetition and drilling (with a use of visual material) (65% of group 1 and 67% of group 2) with the further preferences of such methods, as: grammatical translation (58%), repetition and drilling (with a use of audial means) (54%), training communicative skills based on key words and phrases (45%), analysis of texts (43%), spontaneous communication on the studied topics (28%) and project method (17%) (in group 1), and grammatical translation (56%), repetition and drilling (with a use of audial means) (45%), training communicative skills based on key words and phrases (43%), project method (35%), analysis of texts (32%) and spontaneous communication on the studied topics (19%) (in group 2).

The most appropriate language learning method for the fifth-year senior undergraduates is grammatical translation (58%) followed by repetition and drilling (with a use of audial means) (53%), training communicative skills based on key words and phrases (50%), repetition and drilling (with a use of visual means) as well as project method (47%), analysis of texts (44%) and spontaneous communication on the studied topics (33%).

For the first-year postgraduates of the Masters course the most efficient language learning method is a project method (67%) followed by analysis of texts (65%), training communicative skills based on key words and phrases (59%), spontaneous communication on the studied topics (58%), repetition and drilling (with a use of audial means) (56%), grammatical translation (32%), repetition and drilling (with a use of visual means) (22%).

For the second-year postgraduates of the Masters course the most efficient language learning method is training communicative skills based on key words and phrases (87%) followed by analysis of texts (80%), project method (75%), spontaneous communication on the studied topics (67%), grammatical translation (27%), repetition and drilling (with a use of audial means) (23%), repetition and drilling (with a use of visual means) (19%).

Totally, the effectiveness of the language learning methods used in all the surveyed groups of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Quantitative ratios of the language learning methods efficiently used by the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University students, presented in (%)

Methods of the language learning	Group 1 junior (1 st year) undergraduate students (aged from 17 to 20 years old)	Group 2 senior (4 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 20 to 26 years old)	Group 3 senior (5 th year) undergraduate students (aged from 21 to 30 years old)	Group 4 postgraduate students (of the 1 st year of Masters course) (aged from 22 to 50 years old)	Group 5 postgraduate students (of the 2 nd year of Masters course) (aged from 23 to 40 years old)
Grammatical translation	58%	56%	58%	32%	27%
Repetition and drilling (of words, texts, grammar forms) with a use of visual means	65%	67%	47%	22%	19%
Repetition and drilling (of words, texts, grammar forms) with a use of audial means	54%	45%	53%	56%	23%
Analysis of texts	43 %	32%	44 %	65 %	80%
Training communicative skills (dialogues or monologues) based on key words and phrases	45%	43%	50%	59%	87%
Project method (making reports, abstracts, etc.)	17 %	35 %	47 %	67 %	75%
Spontaneous communication on the studied topics	28%	19 %	33 %	58%	67%



Structuring Individual Foreign Language Programs at Different Stages of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University Course

All the received data demonstrating the students' – 1) conscious goals, 2) preferred types of classroom activity and 3) individual styles of the target language learning – enabled us to identify the following educational programs in a foreign language for the students at different (junior, senior undergraduate and postgraduate) stages of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University course.

At first, we have to note that in the 1st year of the junior undergraduate course a language learning is primarily aimed at studying a language itself. In this period students are introduced into their professional lexis and practice grammar rules. As the majority of them are able to learn on concrete facts and in communicative ways, they mostly learn the language with a use of exemplary texts (as well as dialogues) of various communicative situations – both of general and professionally related ones. To achieve the necessary language skills (Mastering professional lexis, grammar rules and communicative skills) in this study process students need to use a variety of methods (including gaming activities). And most of the lessons are organized as a group work managed by a teacher. With some junior students being unconscious of their professional goals of a foreign language learning, in this study course the choice of teaching material as well as methods is occasionally based on the students' personal interests.

As already noted, most of the senior (fourth and fifth-year) students prefer to learn a language in analytical ways. It makes us suppose by that period of their studies they have acquired enough knowledge and skills to use the studied material (words and grammar rules) in active speech and analysis of professional texts. Thus, in the senior undergraduate course our lessons are partly oriented to Masters some other skills related to the students' future (medical) profession, e.g. – to identify diagnoses, write reports, case histories or scientific projects, etc. – with a use of the studied language. Yet, a great number of students at the given stage are still easier to memorise the material on concrete facts, which requires to furthermore use exemplary texts as well as key words and phrases to Masters the necessary language (and communicative) skills. And in this study period the language course more involves the students' individual work with a following group discussion. In addition, the training of communicative speech has to include more of those situations which are related to the students' professional areas, such as – conferences, seminars or conversations between doctors and patients, etc.

The postgraduate (Masters) course is basically aimed at the provision of graduate medical specialists with a supplementary linguistic profession, such as – Intercultural Professional Communication and Theory and Practice of Translation in the professional field (Sechenov



First Moscow State Medical University, 2016). The objectives of the given program include a complex study of various language skills (reading, listening, oral and written communication) to be used for both general and professional purposes. Our survey shows that the majority of students of the described study course prefer ‘concrete facts’ and ‘communicative’ ways of a language learning. And only few of them tend to learn by analytical methods. With the given types of learners, in Masters language course we included another set of exemplary texts (monologues and dialogues) of various styles to achieve the necessary objectives.

As we mentioned earlier, one of the major tasks of a modern specialist is to master intercultural communication in a certain professional area. It means that the goal of professionally oriented language learning is not only to achieve a language competence (knowledge of language rules and lexis to be used in practice), but also – the rules of constructive communication with representatives of a different national culture. According to the given requirements, at all the presented stages the tertiary medical language course also includes teaching students the communicative culture of the target language native speakers as well as modes of tolerant behavior to others.

Conclusion

By the results of our teaching experiment, we can conclude that the effectiveness of a language learning by adult students is, mainly, dependent on the following factors: 1) the particular goals students are aware of, 2) individual learning styles and 3) language learning experience.

Our research shows that most of the students at all the stages of the described medical tertiary course consider understanding professional texts as the basic goal of a foreign language learning for their careers. The second place in occurrence in all the surveyed groups of students is occupied by the goal of the target language communicative skills acquisition. In this regard, a greater number of the junior undergraduates think of applying the studied language in the situations, such as – doctor-patient communication and training foreign specialists – in comparison with the senior undergraduates and postgraduates of whom more students find important to use the language in scientific communications, such as – conferences or seminars.

According to the other data, more senior undergraduates as well as postgraduates than the junior undergraduates intend to use the language in written scientific communication, i.e. – for scientific publications in foreign sources. Most of them fall on the postgraduates of the second year. And a greater number of the junior undergraduates and postgraduates (in comparison with the senior undergraduates) think of a prospect of working abroad.



The peculiar learning styles as well as previous language learning experiences helped the students determine their appropriate methods of the language learning.

The obtained results show that during the undergraduate medical course (at all the researched stages) the students primarily achieved a language competence by repetition and drilling as well as – grammatical translation. The exemplary texts (containing key lexis) served as the background for training students' communicative speech. The postgraduates were more able to use the language in practice: the students of the first postgraduate year possessed the skill of written communication (i.e. – creating project works) with that of analyses of texts; in turn, for most of the second-year postgraduate students the following methods were appropriate: training communicative skills (with a use of key lexis) followed by analysis of texts.



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