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DIGITAL AND TRADITIONAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS IN THE US AND SOUTH KOREA IN PREPARATION FOR GLOBAL HEALTHCARE AND RESEARCH

The article presents a comparative analysis of digital and traditional approaches to teaching English to medical students in the United States and South Korea in the context of preparing them for global healthcare and international scientific research. The relevance of the topic is determined by the growing role of English as a key tool for professional communication, academic writing, and intercultural interaction in the medical field. The article emphasizes that proficiency in English is essential for

medical students' participation in international conferences, clinical exchanges, and research projects, as well as for effective integration into the global healthcare system.

The study analyses current trends in English language instruction at medical universities in the United States and South Korea. In the U.S., language training is directly integrated into both academic and clinical practice, combining traditional teaching methods with digital technologies, simulation programs, and international projects. In South Korea, the process is more centralized, relying on government initiatives such as Brain Korea 21 (BK21) and BK21 Plus, aimed at the internationalization of higher education. At the same time, research indicates a gap between academic language preparation and the real communicative demands of clinical practice.

Particular attention is given to comparing the effectiveness of traditional and digital methods. Traditional approaches (lectures, seminars, written assignments, clinical practicums) develop basic grammatical and lexical competence but do not always foster productive skills, such as participation in discussions, presentations, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Digital technologies (online courses, interactive platforms, simulation environments, and webinars) provide new opportunities for practical mastery of professional English, allowing students to receive immediate feedback and work in settings close to real clinical situations. Combining digital and traditional methods contributes to the development of communicative competence, academic writing skills, presentation abilities, and intercultural collaboration.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that effective language training for future medical professionals requires the integration of disciplinary specificity, traditional and digital teaching methods, and international experience. The combination of classroom instruction with digital platforms, simulation-based training, and inter-university collaboration creates conditions for developing globally competent specialists capable of intercultural communication and participation in international research. Future research should focus on developing integrated English language training models for various medical specialties, improving tools for assessing productive skills, and expanding comparative international studies of language education practices.

***Keywords**: English language teaching; the USA; South Korea; medical students; global healthcare; international scientific research; communicative competence; simulation-based learning; intercultural interaction.*

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ЦИФРОВІ ТА КЛАСИЧНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТІВ МЕДИЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ У США ТА ПІВДЕННІЙ КОРЕЇ ДЛЯ ПІДГОТОВКИ ДО ГЛОБАЛЬНОЇ ОХОРОНИ ЗДОРОВ'Я ТА НАУКОВИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ

Стаття присвячена порівняльному аналізу цифрових і традиційних підходів до навчання англійської мови студентів медичних спеціальностей у США та Південній Кореї. Розглянуто особливості інтеграції мовної підготовки з клінічною практикою, науковими дослідженнями та цифровими технологіями. Визначено переваги поєднання аудиторних занять із онлайн-ресурсами, симуляціями та вебінарами для розвитку комунікативної компетентності майбутніх медиків у глобальному контексті. Окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень, зокрема вивчення дисциплінарної специфіки, впровадження нових методів оцінювання продуктивних навичок і розширення міжнародних порівняльних аналізів.

***Ключові слова:** навчання англійської мови; США; Південна Корея; студенти медичних спеціальностей; глобальна охорона здоров'я; міжнародні наукові дослідження; комунікативна компетентність; симуляційне навчання; міжкультурна взаємодія.*

Introduction. In today's globalized world, the English language has become not only a means of intercultural communication but also a key tool in the professional training of medical specialists. For students of medical disciplines, proficiency in English is critically important not only for reading scientific publications, participating in international conferences, and exchanging clinical experience but also for active integration into global healthcare systems. The spread of digital technologies, online platforms, and interactive learning resources creates new opportunities for studying English, complementing traditional classroom activities, academic seminars, and practical training sessions.

In this context, there is a significant differentiation in approaches to language training for medical students across countries. The United States is traditionally characterized by the extensive implementation of integrated language programs in medical education, which combine academic writing, clinical communication, and work with scientific sources. South Korea, in turn, is actively developing English-language courses and programs for medical students as part of its strategy to internationalize higher education and enhance the competitiveness of its scientific research. Digital resources such as online seminars, webinars, academic writing platforms, and English-language clinical simulations are becoming an integral part of training future medical professionals.

Despite the active implementation of these approaches, the comparative combination of traditional and digital methods of teaching English to medical students remains insufficiently explored. Particularly relevant is the issue of the effectiveness of such approaches in developing communicative competence necessary for participation in international research projects, clinical practice, and global health programs.

The purpose of the article is to conduct a comparative analysis of digital and traditional approaches to teaching English to medical students in the United States and South Korea, to identify their advantages and limitations, and to assess their impact on preparing specialists for international medical practice and scientific research. The findings of this study may serve as a foundation for optimizing language training in medical educational institutions and for implementing integrated educational models capable of enhancing students' competence in a global context.

Review of the sources. Over the past ten to fifteen years, considerable attention from the academic community has been devoted to the issues of English-medium instruction (EMI) and the development of students' English-language competence in the context of higher education. In particular, the study English Medium Teaching in Korean Higher Education: Policy Debates and Reality [2, 431] focuses on the analysis of policies and approaches to EMI in Korean universities. The authors found that, although EMI was being actively implemented, questions of effectiveness, student motivation, and the adequacy of language preparation remained unresolved. This study laid an important theoretical foundation for further research in this field.

The study The Reform Process of English Medium Instruction in Korean Higher Education [6, 84] expands on this discussion by analysing government programs such as Brain Korea 21 (BK21) and BK21 Plus, as well as their impact on the internationalization of Korean higher education. The authors emphasize that these government initiatives created a favourable environment for the development of EMI; however, there remains a need for a generalized model applicable across different academic disciplines.

Another significant contribution is the article EMI (English Medium Instruction) in South Korean Elite Universities [1, 465], which focuses on four elite South Korean universities and provides data on students' perceptions of EMI courses, their motivation, and linguistic challenges. The authors note that, despite high expectations, there are still imbalances between language training and academic practice.

A similar issue, but with a specific focus on medical education, is explored in the study Mind Your Language: The Importance of English Language Skills in an International Medical Programme (IMP) [3, 405]. This research demonstrates that students in medical programs recognize the importance of English for research and clinical work; however, their training often lacks sufficient focus on the specific linguistic contexts relevant to their field.

Additionally, the publication Implementing English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in South Korea: Nursing Students' Ongoing Needs Analysis [5] shows that English courses for nursing students in Korea do not fully meet their needs due to limited materials, insufficient adaptation, and the underestimation of oral communication skills.

Despite the significant contributions of previous research, several important aspects remain insufficiently explored, which this article aims to address. First, the disciplinary specificity of language training requires more detailed analysis. Although studies on EMI generally cover university education as a whole, medical education has a unique communicative and scientific context that demands separate consideration. Second, the interaction between digital and traditional methods of English language teaching remains underexplored. Most studies examine EMI as a policy framework or a general model, but little attention is paid to how digital platforms, online seminars, and hybrid learning formats interact with the classical language preparation of medical students.

Third, there is a gap in the assessment of communicative competence. Previous research has often focused on certificates and standardized tests such as TOEFL or IELTS, or on evaluating students' attitudes, while real communicative actions – such as participation in international projects, academic writing, presentations, and interdisciplinary communication – remain insufficiently studied. Fourth, the comparative international context requires deeper analysis. Although the Korean experience is well represented, few studies compare the systems of the United States and South Korea in the context of medical education and language training, particularly regarding the balance between digital and traditional approaches. Finally, despite the strong policy emphasis on internationalization, less attention has been paid to how language training

specifically prepares medical students for participation in the global scientific community and international medical practice.

Presentation of the material. When preparing medical students for academic and professional activity at the international level, it is particularly important to consider the disciplinary specificity of language training. Medical education is highly complex: in addition to general academic skills, it requires mastery of specialized terminology, understanding of clinical protocols, and the development of interdisciplinary communication. According to Chan et al. (2022), medical students recognize the critical importance of English proficiency for international research, academic publication, and participation in clinical exchanges. At the same time, traditional language courses often fail to meet practical needs, limiting the development of productive skills such as delivering presentations, writing research papers, and engaging in clinical discussions.

In South Korea, English-language training for medical students is largely regulated by national programs such as Brain Korea 21 (BK21) and BK21 Plus [6, 85]. These initiatives provide a framework for the internationalization of education and research, yet training standards remain inconsistent. Studies by Bolton et al. [1, 466] show that students often experience a gap between academic knowledge and the real linguistic demands of professional activity. Furthermore, the limited number of courses focused on practical clinical English creates additional barriers for students.

In the United States, medical language training is integrated into both academic and clinical practice, allowing students to develop English proficiency while engaging in simulation labs, clinical rotations, and international projects [3, 405]. This integration creates a natural environment for developing productive communicative skills, including interdisciplinary collaboration and the preparation of scientific publications in English.

Traditional methods of teaching English in medical education include lectures, seminars, written assignments, and practical clinical sessions, which provide students with basic grammatical and lexical competence as well as the development of academic writing skills. These approaches have long been considered effective for building fundamental reading, writing, and basic oral communication abilities. However, the study by Bolton et al. [1, 467] highlights the presence of a "gap" between the academic English taught in traditional courses and the real linguistic tasks encountered in clinical and research settings. Students often perform well on written assignments but struggle when participating in clinical discussions, international conferences, or remote collaborations with colleagues from other countries. Moreover, traditional methods tend to be less flexible: they do not always allow for the rapid adaptation of materials to modern technologies or the evolving needs of global medical practice.

Digital learning methods, by contrast, encompass online courses, interactive platforms, webinars, simulation environments, and project-based activities. Such tools enable students not only to acquire vocabulary and grammar but also to practice language use in professional contexts with immediate feedback. For example, online simulations of clinical cases allow learners to practice professional terminology, clinical reasoning, patient documentation, and intercultural communication simultaneously. In U.S. universities, digital resources are actively integrated into curricula, facilitating remote interaction between students and international peers, participation in joint research projects, and attendance at online seminars. In South Korea, digital methods are gradually being incorporated into hybrid models of instruction, where classroom learning is combined with online practice – an approach that enhances communicative competence, particularly in academic writing and presentation skills [6, 86]. Additionally, digital platforms allow for interactive assessment through quizzes, online discussions, and clinical decision-making simulations, making the learning process more dynamic and adaptable to students' individual needs.

Language proficiency assessment has traditionally relied on standardized tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, or TEPS, which primarily evaluate receptive skills – reading and listening. Studies by Chan et al. [3] and Choi [5] emphasize that productive skills, such as participating in clinical discussions, writing research articles, and giving presentations, often fall outside the scope of standard evaluations. To bridge this gap, modern programs incorporate practical assignments, simulation cases, and project-based work in English. For instance, medical students may participate in simulated international clinical conferences, where they must use specialized vocabulary, justify clinical decisions, and engage in discussions with peers from other countries.

A comparative analysis of practices in the United States and South Korea reveals distinct approaches to language training. In the U.S., language education is integrated directly into academic and clinical practice. Students engage in international simulations, collaborative research projects, and webinars, allowing them to develop globally oriented competence through a combination of digital and traditional methods [4, 14]. In South Korea, the system is more centralized and standardized, with a strong emphasis on test results; however, in recent years, digital formats have gradually been incorporated into the educational process. Flexibility in course and certification selection enables students to tailor their training to disciplinary needs, though this can create disparities in proficiency levels among students from different programs.

The combination of traditional and digital methods is critically important for effectively preparing medical

students for global healthcare and international research. Integrating classroom lectures, written assignments, and practical training with online simulations and webinars allows students to develop both foundational language skills and practical communication abilities in a professional context. For example, at POSTECH University in South Korea, courses such as Academic English Writing and Research Presentation Skills are combined with online scientific project simulations, which promote the simultaneous development of academic writing, presentation abilities, and clinical competence. Similarly, in American universities, digital platforms enable students to participate in international seminars, collaborative research, and clinical case studies, creating an interactive learning environment and fostering intercultural competence.

Future English language programs for medical students should be grounded in four key principles: the integration of disciplinary specificity through clinical scenarios, terminology, and scientific examples; the combination of traditional and digital teaching methods to develop all aspects of communication; the assessment of productive skills through practical tasks, projects, and presentations; and international orientation through interaction with foreign students and researchers via digital platforms. Such an approach ensures comprehensive preparation of students for the modern challenges of medicine and science on a global scale, cultivating professionals capable of working effectively in intercultural environments and adapting to the rapidly evolving world of healthcare.

Conclusions. The analysis of modern approaches to teaching English to medical students in the United States and South Korea demonstrates that the combination of traditional and digital methods is a key factor in the effective training of future medical professionals. Traditional classroom lessons, seminars, and written assignments provide fundamental grammatical and lexical competence, while digital resources – including online simulations, webinars, and interactive platforms – enable the development of productive communicative skills in professional and international contexts. The comparative analysis shows that integrating disciplinary specificity with both digital and traditional teaching methods fosters globally oriented competence among students, preparing them to work effectively in international medical practice and research. The U.S. experience demonstrates a high level of integration between language training, clinical practice, and academic work, whereas in South Korea, digital methods are gradually complementing the centralized education system, creating more flexible conditions for students to adapt to the evolving challenges of global medicine.

Future research in the field of language training for medical students encompasses several key directions. First, it is essential to conduct a detailed analysis of disciplinary specificity across various medical professions – including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists – taking into account the unique features of clinical, scientific, and interdisciplinary communication. Second, further investigation is needed into optimal models for combining traditional and digital learning methods that most effectively develop all aspects of communicative competence. It is also necessary to introduce new tools for assessing productive language skills that incorporate practical tasks, participation in international projects, academic writing, and English-language presentations. Moreover, expanding comparative international studies beyond the United States and South Korea would allow researchers to consider cultural, educational, and technological factors that influence the effectiveness of language training. Finally, continued research into the effectiveness of modern digital platforms, simulation programs, and interactive online tools is vital for enhancing professional English competence among medical students.

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