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FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS ELECTIVE COURSES IN MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES OF SOUTH KOREA AND THE USA: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH IN THE LIGHT OF PEDAGOGICAL COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF A. V. VYKHRUSHCH

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ІНОЗЕМНІ МОВИ ЯК ВИБІРКОВІ ДИСЦИПЛІНИ В МЕДИЧНИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТАХ ПІВДЕННОЇ КОРЕЇ І США: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ ПІДХІД У СВІТЛІ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ КОМПАРАТИВІСТИКИ А. В. ВИХРУЩА

Abstract. The article analyzes the teaching of foreign languages as elective courses in medical universities in South Korea and the USA, particularly through the lens of pedagogical comparative studies, taking into account the scientific legacy of A. V. Vykhreshch. In the context of globalization and the internationalization of the educational space, foreign language proficiency has become an important element of medical students' professional training. Communicative competence facilitates effective communication with patients, colleagues, and the academic community, and also provides opportunities for international academic mobility and collaboration.

Special attention is given to the experience of South Korea, where the study of foreign languages became an important part of medical education after the Korean War, when the need to learn foreign languages was linked to international cooperation and access to scientific medical literature. Later, English became dominant, but the practice of learning other languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, also developed, enhancing the competitiveness of graduates in the international labor market. In the USA, the history of foreign language teaching in medical universities has had several stages, from limited language studies to the introduction of specialized Spanish language courses for doctors, driven by the multicultural situation in the country.

A comparative analysis of the experiences of South Korea and the USA shows that the integration of foreign languages into medical education contributes to the development of cultural sensitivity, which is an important aspect of modern medical practice. The article also discusses the significance of language courses in improving medical students' professional skills and their role in preparing for participation in international medical research and conferences.

Key words: medical education, communicative competence, intercultural competence, USA, South Korea, physician training, pedagogical comparative studies.

Анотація. У статті аналізується викладання іноземних мов як вибіркового дисциплін у медичних університетах Південної Кореї та США, зокрема через призму педагогічної компаративістики, враховуючи наукову спадщину А. В. Вихруща. У контексті глобалізації та інтернаціоналізації освітнього простору, володіння іноземними мовами для студентів медичного профілю стає важливим елементом їх професійної підготовки. Комунікативна компетентність сприяє ефективній комунікації з пацієнтами, колегами та науковою спільнотою, а також забезпечує можливості для міжнародної академічної мобільності й співробітництва.

Особливу увагу приділено досвіду Південної Кореї, де вивчення іноземних мов стало важливою частиною медичної освіти після Корейської війни, коли необхідність освоєння іноземних мов була пов'язана з міжнародною співпрацею та доступом до наукової медичної літератури. Пізніше англійська мова стала домінуючою, але також розвивалася практика вивчення інших мов, таких як китайська та японська, що підвищує конкурентоспроможність випускників на міжнародному ринку праці. У США історія викладання іноземних мов у медичних університетах має свої етапи, від обмеженого вивчення мов до впровадження спеціалізованих курсів іспанської мови для лікарів, що зумовлено багатокультурною ситуацією в країні.

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Порівняльний аналіз досвіду Південної Кореї та США демонструє, що інтеграція іноземних мов у медичну освіту сприяє розвитку культурної чутливості, що є важливим аспектом у сучасній медичній практиці. У статті також розглянуто значення мовних курсів для покращення професійних навичок медичних студентів, а також їх роль у підготовці до участі в міжнародних медичних дослідженнях і конференціях.

Ключові слова: медична освіта, комунікативна компетентність, міжкультурна компетентність, США, Південна Корея, підготовка лікарів, педагогічна компаративістика.

Introduction. In the modern world, characterized by globalization and the internationalization of the educational space, the issue of studying foreign languages in medical universities has become particularly relevant. Since the medical field is one of the most dynamic and internationally oriented sectors, future doctors and medical professionals must master foreign languages to communicate effectively with patients, colleagues, and the scientific community. The study of foreign languages as elective courses in medical universities enables students to broaden their professional worldview, familiarize themselves with the latest achievements in global medicine, and participate in international scientific discussions. While the primary focus is traditionally placed on English as a global means of communication, the study of other languages, such as German, French, Spanish, and Chinese, also plays an important role in expanding opportunities for international cooperation and academic mobility of students.

Special interest arises from the experience of South Korea, where the study of foreign languages plays an important role in the medical education system. Through the active integration of English into the curricula of Korean universities, students have the opportunity not only to master professional terminology but also to access the latest scientific research and participate in international internships. Similar approaches are actively employed in medical universities in the United States, where English is the main language of instruction, but courses in other languages are also offered to improve communication with patients of various nationalities. In this context, a comparative analysis of foreign language instruction in medical universities in South Korea, the United States, and other countries allows for an assessment of the effectiveness of different approaches and the development of recommendations for improving students' language training.

The study of the experience of South Korea and the USA in this area should be based on the comparative method, which allows for a comparative analysis of educational models and their effectiveness in different national contexts. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the theoretical approaches of A.V. Vykhreshch to pedagogical comparative studies and their application to the study of language education in medical universities. His approaches to comparing educational models help identify best practices and adapt them to national contexts, making his scientific legacy relevant to modern research in the field of international education [1].

The **aim** of the article is to analyse the teaching of foreign languages as elective courses in medical universities in South Korea and the United States through the lens of pedagogical comparative studies, particularly in light of the scientific legacy of A. V. Vykhreshch.

Theoretical framework: Historical analysis of foreign language teaching in medical universities in South Korea shows the gradual integration of language training into the educational process. After the Korean War (1950–1953), the country focused on restoring education, and by the 1960s, English language courses were introduced for students from various specialties. This was driven by active cooperation with international medical organizations and the need for students to familiarize themselves with English-language literature. In the 1980s, medical universities began including English in their core programs due to agreements with international partners, which necessitated preparing students for international conferences and internships. During this period, the popularity of learning other languages, such as German and French, grew due to expanded cooperation with European medical institutions. Since the 2000s, foreign languages have gained even more importance in medical universities, with specialized English courses for medical professionals introduced, as well as the growing importance of online courses and multimedia platforms for independent language training.

The modern system of foreign language instruction in medical universities in South Korea is characterized by a high level of integration of language training into professional education. In addition to English, students can choose courses in Chinese, Japanese, or other languages, which aligns with the growing demand for international cooperation in the medical field. This approach ensures the competitiveness of Korean graduates in the global labour market and contributes to the increased international integration of medical education.

Let us consider examples of the experience of South Korean medical universities in teaching foreign languages as elective courses. Seoul National University (SNU) is one of the most prestigious universities in South Korea, known for its high quality of medical education. In their medical school, there are active foreign language courses, including English and Chinese, which promote the development of international communication and cultural competence.

At SNU College of Medicine, students have the opportunity to improve their medical English skills through specialized courses that cover medical terminology, clinical cases, scientific article discussions, and preparation for international conferences and publications. Students acquire the necessary language skills for participating in international medical research, exchanging knowledge with other doctors, and academic institutions.

The Chinese language is particularly important for South Korea due to its proximity to China and the growing number of Chinese patients. At SNU, courses are organized to teach students medical Chinese terminology and language skills for working with Chinese-speaking patients. This includes understanding communication specifics, medical issues, and assisting in translations between doctors and patients.

One of the important directions of the program is the development of cultural competence. Students study the socio-cultural characteristics of patients from various countries and linguistic groups, which allows for better interaction with patients during medical consultations [7].

Yonsei University is one of the largest universities in South Korea, which also actively develops language programs in medical education. Foreign language programs contribute to the development of intercultural communication and the preparation of students for work in an international medical environment. At Yonsei University College of Medicine, there is an English language course for doctors, which focuses on medical terminology and practical communication skills in the medical field. This enables students not only to interact effectively with international colleagues but also to be prepared for participation in international research projects and academic exchanges.

Due to its geographical and cultural proximity to Japan, Yonsei also offers Japanese language courses for medical professionals. These courses focus on the medical terminology used in Japan and on developing skills for effective communication with Japanese-speaking patients. This is important for doctors who may work with Japanese-speaking patients or collaborate with Japanese medical institutions.

Yonsei actively integrates cultural and language programs in the context of medical education, which includes learning not only language skills but also cultural aspects of treatment in different countries. Students learn how different cultures influence interactions in the medical environment, allowing them to become more sensitive to the needs of patients from diverse cultures [9].

Korea University College of Medicine is another leading university in South Korea, where foreign languages, especially English and Chinese, play

an important role in preparing future medical professionals.

At Korea University College of Medicine, there are special English language courses for medical students, which include training in medical terminology as well as developing skills for effective communication in an international context. Students have the opportunity to work with English-speaking colleagues, conduct research, publish scientific articles, and participate in international medical conferences.

As part of intercultural communication programs, students learn the importance of understanding cultural differences when providing medical services. These courses cover both language skills and preparation for working in multicultural teams, which is crucial for students who plan to work or research medical issues at the international level.

Since China is an important trade and cultural partner for South Korea, Korea University offers Chinese medical language courses. Students acquire skills for working with Chinese patients, as well as learn medical terminology and typical treatment procedures used in China [5].

The experience of Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Korea University shows how medical universities in South Korea integrate foreign languages into the curriculum to prepare future doctors for work in a multicultural and international environment. Programs focusing on medical English and Chinese are key for effective communication with patients and colleagues from other countries, which is important for improving the quality of medical care in a globalized world.

These universities also actively develop intercultural competence courses, which prepare future doctors to work with patients from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, thereby improving interaction and the quality of medical services.

Thus, the experience of leading medical universities in South Korea demonstrates a high level of integration of foreign language instruction into medical education. The use of innovative teaching methods, an emphasis on professional language skills, and intercultural communication create favourable conditions for the preparation of highly qualified professionals capable of working in an international medical environment.

The study of foreign languages in medical schools in the United States has a long history that has changed over time. In the 19th century, language instruction was limited, but by the end of the century, due to immigration and international connections, there was a need to study foreign languages to serve patients of different backgrounds. In the 1960s, the passage of the Bilingual Education Act stimulated the development of foreign language programs in

medical schools [2]. In 1965, John Rassias developed an intensive language teaching method, which gained popularity in the U.S. [6]. However, in the 1980s, the “English-only” movement restricted the use of other languages in educational institutions. Since the 1990s, the need for cultural competence has increased, and medical schools began implementing programs in Spanish and other languages to improve communication with diverse patients.

In modern U.S. medical schools, the study of foreign languages as elective subjects has become an important component of preparing future medical professionals. This enables students not only to acquire language skills but also to develop cultural sensitivity, which is essential for providing quality medical care in a multicultural society.

One of the leading medical schools in the U.S., where the program of foreign language instruction as elective subjects is well developed, is Harvard Medical School (HMS). Harvard Medical School actively integrates foreign languages into its curriculum through courses focused on developing intercultural competence and improving communication skills among students. This is particularly important for future doctors, as a large percentage of patients in the U.S. do not speak English, and the ability to communicate in foreign languages becomes an important aspect of professional activity.

In many medical schools in the USA, including Harvard, courses specializing in medical terminology in other languages, including Spanish, are offered. This contributes to the development of professional language skills, enabling students to work with patients from different cultural and linguistic groups. These courses are often elective and allow students to deepen their language knowledge needed in specific clinical situations.

One of the popular programs is the Spanish for Healthcare Professionals course. Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the USA, and the medical school deems it essential to equip students with the necessary language skills to interact with patients who do not speak English. The course covers topics such as medical terminology, patient conversations, and providing medical consultations and assistance to Spanish-speaking patients. The foreign language instruction at Harvard Medical School is often integrated with clinical activities. Students have the opportunity to apply their language skills during medical practicums held at various medical institutions where patients speak other languages. This not only improves language skills but also provides important experience in real medical conditions.

Harvard also offers a course that focuses on the cultural aspects of medical language practices, helping future doctors better understand the

sociocultural contexts of patients from different linguistic backgrounds. This enables future doctors not only to master the language but also to consider cultural and ethnic differences during medical consultations. Elective foreign language courses at Harvard Medical School allow students to specialize in languages that are important in medical practice (such as Arabic, Chinese, and French). This opens up opportunities for students to gain qualifications in languages that enable them to work with patients from different countries.

The experience of Harvard Medical School shows the crucial role foreign languages play in preparing healthcare professionals. The integration of language courses as elective subjects helps students not only master medical terminology in other languages but also develop the necessary skills to work with diverse patients. This is an important element of modern medical education, especially in a country as linguistically and culturally diverse as the USA [3].

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, one of the most prestigious medical schools in the USA, also actively develops programs that incorporate foreign languages into the educational process, including courses aimed at enhancing the communication and intercultural skills of future medical professionals. Since Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages among patients in the USA, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine offers courses for students and physicians focused on medical Spanish. These courses focus on learning medical terminology, developing language skills for effective communication with patients, and providing first aid to Spanish-speaking individuals.

As part of the intercultural competence course, students have the opportunity to explore how different cultures and languages can influence interactions in the medical field. This course is important for preparing doctors to work with patients from different ethnic groups. Students acquire skills in reducing language and cultural barriers that may arise during medical consultations. Given that the university is located in a multicultural environment, students can apply their language skills in real clinical situations. This is useful when working with patients who speak different languages and helps students not only improve their language skills but also deepen their understanding of cultural differences in the context of medicine [4].

University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) School of Medicine is another excellent example of a medical school where foreign languages are actively integrated into the curriculum, particularly in the context of medical education and clinical practice.

At UCSF, there is a program focused on Spanish for healthcare professionals. The course focuses on medical terminology used in clinical practice and the development of skills for effective communication

with Spanish-speaking patients. Special attention is given to practical aspects such as patient interviews, providing medical recommendations, and ensuring understanding of treatment procedures. UCSF also offers courses in intercultural communication, which is an important aspect of medical practice, as patients from different cultures may have different perceptions of health and treatment. Students learn to take cultural differences into account when providing medical care, which helps improve interactions with patients from different cultural environments.

UCSF also offers a “Health and Society” program, which examines the social, cultural, and linguistic factors that may influence health and well-being. As part of this program, students study foreign languages and cultural aspects, which allows them to better understand the needs of patients from different social and linguistic groups. The program includes lectures, practical sessions, and research projects that help students explore how culture and language can influence healthcare and health.

UCSF actively employs an interdisciplinary approach, where courses in foreign languages and cultural competencies are combined with clinical practices. This allows students not only to develop language skills but also to enhance their understanding of cultural and social differences, which is crucial for providing high-quality medical care [8].

The experiences of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and UCSF School of Medicine demonstrate how foreign languages and intercultural competencies are integrated into medical education in the USA. Both schools offer courses that help students develop language skills to work with different language groups, which is an important element of medical practice in today’s multicultural society. This approach improves the quality of medical services by helping doctors effectively interact with patients from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Thus, the study of foreign languages in medical universities in South Korea and the USA has different historical backgrounds and stages of development. In South Korea, after the Korean War, the main goal of teaching foreign languages was the integration of the English language into medical education to promote cooperation with international organizations and familiarize students with scientific literature. During the 1980s, specialized courses for medical professionals were introduced, and from the early 2000s, there was a significant increase in the number of language courses, particularly Chinese and Japanese, due to the need for international collaboration.

Meanwhile, in the USA, although foreign language study became more widespread in medical schools in the mid-20th century, historically, its use was limited. Initially, foreign languages were

taught as part of general education, and in the 1960s, the Bilingual Education Act was passed, which encouraged the integration of languages into medical education. Since the 1990s, the focus has shifted towards cultural competence and bilingualism through programs in Spanish and other languages, preparing medical professionals to work in a multicultural environment.

In South Korea, the study of foreign languages in medical universities has become an important component of preparing professionals for international medical practice. English language courses are essential, while Chinese and Japanese have emerged due to the active development of cooperation with China and Japan. At universities such as Seoul National University (SNU), Yonsei University, and Korea University, students receive specialized knowledge in medical terminology, clinical cases, and learn about the cultural peculiarities of patients from various countries. An important aspect is also the development of intercultural competence to improve communication with patients from different cultural environments.

In the USA, medical schools such as Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and UCSF are also actively incorporating foreign languages as elective subjects for medical students. Special attention is given to the Spanish language, which is crucial for interacting with Spanish-speaking patients. Furthermore, medical universities in the USA include courses on intercultural communication and cultural aspects of medical practice, which help students better understand the needs of patients from different cultures.

In South Korea, significant attention is given to specialized language courses for medical professionals, which include terminology and professional communication. Some universities, such as SNU, also offer Chinese language courses for working with Chinese patients. An important focus is also placed on the use of multimedia platforms and online courses for students’ independent language preparation.

In the USA, medical schools like Harvard and UCSF use intensive courses that focus on medical terminology, patient dialogue, and providing medical services. These courses are actively integrated with clinical practices, giving students the opportunity to apply their language skills in real-life situations. The programs also include a substantial amount of educational materials to develop intercultural competence, which is necessary for effective work in a multicultural society.

Both South Korea and the USA are developing foreign language study programs in medical universities, but with different emphases and approaches. South Korea focuses on integrating foreign languages into international medical practice,

particularly through English, Chinese, and Japanese. In contrast, the USA emphasizes bilingualism and cultural competence, enabling doctors to interact effectively with patients from different linguistic

and cultural groups. Both approaches contribute to improving the quality of medical services and preparing professionals for work in a globalized world.

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