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DEVELOPING ENGLISH TERMINOLOGICAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS OF MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE UNIFIED STATE QUALIFICATION EXAM

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ФОРМУВАННЯ АНГЛОМОВНОЇ ТЕРМІНОЛОГІЧНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ У СТУДЕНТІВ МЕДИЧНИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ У КОНТЕКСТІ ПІДГОТОВКИ ДО ПЕРШОГО ЕТАПУ ЄДКІ

Abstract. The article analyses the specifics of developing English terminological competence in medical students within the framework of professionally oriented language training, implemented through the study of the discipline English for Specific Purposes and elective courses aimed at enhancing and practically applying medical terminology. The role of English terminological competence in medical students' preparation for the First Stage of the Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE), including the English for Specific Purposes examination and Krok 1 test items requiring the application of professional terminology within a clinically oriented context, has been established. The relevance of the study has been substantiated by the increasing significance of English language proficiency for the practice of future physicians, as well as by the need to use international scientific sources, clinical guidelines, and evidence-based medical information. Contemporary Ukrainian and international scholarly approaches to teaching English for Specific Purposes, developing lexical competence, and preparing students for Krok 1 test items have been summarised. The essence of English terminological competence has been defined as the ability to understand, interpret, and apply professional terminology within an English-language medical context, particularly when analysing clinical information and completing test items. The practical implementation of developing English terminological competence within the educational process of Ivan Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University by incorporating compulsory and elective components of educational and professional programmes has been presented. The role of the discipline English for Specific Purposes and elective courses developed and implemented by the Department of Foreign Languages in the gradual development of students' English terminological competence, the systematisation of professional vocabulary, and its functional use in clinically oriented situations has been characterised. The importance of integrating English terminological training with the content of academic disciplines covered by the First Stage of the Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE) has been emphasised. Such integration promotes an interdisciplinary approach to the educational process and contributes to the development of professional thinking. It has been concluded that the framework for the gradual development of English terminological competence ensures students' readiness to take the English for Specific Purposes examination, successfully complete Krok 1 test items, and apply English medical terminology in their future professional activities.

Keywords: English terminological competence; medical terminology; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Krok 1; Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE); medical students; professional training; test-oriented learning.

Анотація. У статті проаналізовано специфіку формування англomовної термінологічної компетентності у студентів медичних закладів вищої освіти в умовах професійно орієнтованої мовної підготовки, що реалізується через вивчення дисципліни «Англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням» та вибіркового дисциплін, спрямованих на поглиблення й практичне застосування фахової термінології. Визначено роль англomовної термінологічної компетентності у підготовці студентів до складання першого етапу Єдиного державного кваліфікаційного іспиту (ЄДКІ), зокрема іспиту з англійської мови професійного спрямування та виконання завдань «КРОК 1», що передбачають застосування професійної термінології у клінічно орієнтованому контексті. Обґрунтовано актуальність дослідження, яка визначається зростанням ролі англійської мови у професійній діяльності майбутніх лікарів, потребою в опрацюванні міжнародних наукових джерел, клінічних протоколів та доказової медичної інформації. Узагальнено сучасні вітчизняні та іноземні наукові підходи до навчання англійської мови професійного спрямування, формування

лексичної компетентності та підготовки студентів до виконання тестових завдань формату «КРОК 1». Визначено сутність англомовної термінологічної компетентності як здатності володіти, інтерпретувати та застосовувати професійну термінологію в англомовному медичному контексті, зокрема під час аналізу клінічної інформації та виконання тестових завдань. Висвітлено практичну реалізацію формування англомовної термінологічної компетентності в освітньому процесі Тернопільського національного медичного університету імені І. Я. Горбачевського через систему обов'язкових і вибіркових компонентів освітньо-професійних програм. Охарактеризовано роль дисципліни «Англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням» та вибіркових дисциплін, розроблених і реалізованих кафедрою іноземних мов, у поетапному розвитку англомовної термінологічної компетентності студентів, систематизації професійної лексики та її функціональному використанні в клінічно орієнтованих ситуаціях. Підкреслено значення інтеграції англомовної термінологічної підготовки зі змістом навчальних дисциплін, знання з яких оцінюються під час складання першого етапу ЄДКІ, що забезпечує міждисциплінарний характер навчання та сприяє формуванню професійного мислення. Зроблено висновок, що поетапна модель формування англомовної термінологічної компетентності забезпечує готовність студентів до складання іспиту з англійської мови професійного спрямування, ефективного виконання завдань «КРОК 1» та застосування англомовної медичної термінології у майбутній професійній діяльності.

Ключові слова: англомовна термінологічна компетентність; медична термінологія; англійська мова професійного спрямування; «КРОК 1»; Єдиний державний кваліфікаційний іспит (ЄДКІ); студенти медичних закладів вищої освіти; фахова підготовка; тест-орієнтоване навчання.

Introduction. Contemporary medical education in Ukraine is characterised by increased expectations regarding not only the professional training of medical students but also their English language proficiency as an important means of professional communication. The development of English terminological competence is of particular importance, as it enables future physicians to work with professional information, analyse clinical texts, and use medical terminology within the international medical community. These changes in medical education require an objective assessment of medical students' English language proficiency. The Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE) plays an important role in this process, as it is designed to assess students' professional competence and determine their readiness for professional practice. One of the components of the first stage of the USQE is the English for Specific Purposes examination, which evaluates students' ability to use English medical terminology, analyse specialised literature, and demonstrate their language knowledge in professionally oriented tasks. Krok 1 and the English for Specific Purposes examination are taken at the same time and assess students' professional knowledge, English language proficiency, and ability to apply medical terminology in clinical case-based test items. A distinctive feature of these examinations is their practical orientation: students are expected not only to demonstrate proficiency in medical terminology but also to interpret medical terms accurately and efficiently within clinical contexts, with precise understanding directly affecting the correctness of their responses. Thus, investigating the specifics of English terminological competence formation among medical students, its gradual development within the educational process, and its significance for preparing students for the first stage of the USQE is highly relevant.

The aim of the article is to analyse the specifics of English terminological competence development among medical students within the context of the first stage of the USQE and to determine the role of English for Specific Purposes and elective courses in ensuring students' readiness for the English for Specific Purposes examination and Krok 1 tasks.

Theoretical Framework. In Ukrainian scholarly literature, considerable attention has been paid to methodological aspects of teaching English for Specific Purposes to future physicians. In particular, O. Bieliaieva, V. Kostenko, I. Znamenska, and others examine strategies for improving professional text reading skills, enhancing lexical competence, and preparing students for Krok 1 test items (Bieliaieva et al., 2020; Kostenko et al., 2025; Znamenska et al., 2025). These studies emphasise the effectiveness of using systematically organised educational materials aimed at helping students acquire English medical terminology and enhance their ability to apply it in clinical situations.

Scholars' works addressing students' preparation for licensing examinations in Ukrainian medical institutions of higher education (Krok 1) focus on test-oriented learning, skills in analysing clinical situations, and solving multiple-choice items. Researchers note that students' success largely depends on the level of their English terminological competence and their ability to recognise key medical terms in medical texts (Bieliaieva et al., 2020; Znamenska et al., 2025).

Proper training of healthcare professionals as well as formation of future medics' professional English language competence and culture require the educational process in higher institutions to be focused on the future specialists' learning language competences which contribute to developing speech activities: grammar, lexical, and phonetic (Kitura & Prokop, 2023, p. 144).

The theoretical framework of this study is based on English for Specific Purposes international research. The fundamental principles of the English for Specific Purposes approach developed by T. Hutchinson and A. Waters emphasise the need to adapt the educational process with the professional needs of students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The ESP approach was further developed in the works of D. Belcher, who considers ESP a field of foreign language education that takes into account the specifics of professional environments and students' educational needs in a particular professional field (Belcher, 2009). I. S. P. Nation and N. Schmitt

investigate vocabulary mastering processes, focusing on the role of contextual learning, repetition, and cognitive processing of terminology units, which are important factors in effective medical terminology mastering (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000).

In addition, recent studies in medical education confirm the effectiveness of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, which integrates language and professional training. Combining CLIL with clinically oriented tasks, case-based learning, and test formats contributes to the development of professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence, the mastering of English medical terminology, and clinical situation analysis skills, which are important for the development of clinical thinking (Coyle, 2007).

Thus, the analysis of scholarly sources shows that, despite available studies on teaching medical English and preparing students for Krok 1, the issue of systematic development of English terminological competence among medical students in the context of the first stage of the USQE remains insufficiently explored and requires further research.

The methodological basis of our study was the content and language integrated learning approach, which involves the integration of professional content mastering and the development of foreign language competence. Theoretical analysis and generalisation of foreign language training practices included the use of clinically oriented tasks, elements of case-based learning, and test items similar to the format of the USQE. These methods contribute to the development of students' English terminological competence and their ability to apply professional knowledge in clinical situations.

The practical implementation of these theoretical approaches is carried out in the educational process of medical institutions of higher education in Ukraine. In particular, at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University, foreign language training of medical and dental students aimed at developing English terminological competence and preparing them for the English for Specific Purposes examination of the first stage of the USQE is provided by the Department of Foreign Languages within a system of courses included in the compulsory and elective components of educational and professional programmes. The discipline English for Specific Purposes plays a leading role in this system, developing students' basic skills of professional English communication and providing the foundation for the development of their English terminological competence. The study of this course involves the gradual mastering the principles of using medical terminology in professional contexts, as well as developing students' ability to analyse English medical texts and apply medical terminology in clinical situations. At the same time, elective courses play an important role in developing English terminological

competence by providing opportunities for further development, systematisation, and practical application of the knowledge acquired through the compulsory English for Specific Purposes course. They enable students to focus on specialised medical vocabulary in accordance with their future professional activities and the specifics of particular medical fields.

The Educational and Professional Programme in Medicine includes the elective courses English Medical Terminology (2nd year) and English Clinical Medical Terminology (3rd year). These courses aim to enrich future physicians' vocabulary, develop skills in the structural and semantic analysis of medical terms, improve understanding of their component structure, and develop the ability to use medical terminology in professionally oriented situations. The Educational and Professional Programme in Dentistry includes the elective courses English Medical Terminology (2nd year) and English Terminology in Dentistry (3rd year). These courses ensure students' proficiency in dentistry-related terminology and contribute to students' ability to use professional information in English.

Elective courses create opportunities for individualising students' educational activities, as they allow them to focus on the terminology aspects that best correspond to their professional interests and future specialisation. They also support the development of students' ability to use functionally individual lexical units in clinical communication, medical documentation, scientific texts, and Krok 1 test items. Thus, the combination of compulsory and elective components of educational and professional programmes forms a comprehensive system for developing students' English terminological competence, ensuring their readiness to take the English for Specific Purposes examination and apply English medical terminology in their future professional activities.

The development of English terminological competence is a gradual process involving several components. It includes not only the mastering professional vocabulary but also the ability to recognise, interpret, and apply terms in English-language contexts (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Belcher, 2009). Important components of this competence include the ability to analyse professional texts and clinical information, complete test items, and use language knowledge in educational and professional situations (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000). The competence-based and ESP approaches consider this type of training as a gradual process of developing students' ability to work with authentic medical materials and test formats similar to those encountered in professional practice.

The development of English terminological competence is a gradual process. It is integrated into the system of courses implemented by the Department of Foreign Languages at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University. During the first year

of study, the foundations of English terminological competence are established within the English for Specific Purposes course, where students acquire essential medical terminology, develop fundamental professional reading skills, and enhance their knowledge of medical vocabulary. The initial stage focuses on general professional language skills and provides the basis for the gradual increase in the complexity of learning materials. The next stage in the development of English terminological competence is carried out during the second year within the framework of elective courses introduced by the Department of Foreign Languages and aimed at further enhancing students' ability to use medical terminology. At this stage, students progress from learning medical vocabulary to its functional use in medical contexts. Students analyse authentic English-language medical texts and clinical situations, and complete test items based on the format of the English for Specific Purposes examination and Krok 1. This approach contributes to the development of skills in analysing clinically oriented information, identifying key terms, establishing cause-and-effect relationships between biomedical processes, and developing effective strategies for completing multiple-choice items. During the third year of study, elective courses focused on clinical aspects contribute to the further development of students' English terminological competence. The courses for medical students are aimed at developing competence in clinical medical terminology, while the courses for dental students deal with specialised terminology in dentistry. This stage places emphasis on clinical cases that reflect real-life clinical situations and facilitate the integration of professionally oriented foreign language training with the development of clinical thinking.

An important feature of the educational process is the interconnection between elective course content and students' professional training. Terminological material is selected in accordance with the content of academic disciplines assessed during the first stage of the USQE. This approach promotes interdisciplinary learning and contributes to the systematisation of professional knowledge. In particular, English Medical Terminology is studied in the context of such fundamental disciplines as human anatomy, histology, medical biology, biological chemistry, physiology, pathological physiology, pathological anatomy, microbiology, and pharmacology. The study of English Medical Terminology within fundamental academic disciplines enables students not only to acquire medical terms but also to understand their use in relevant medical contexts. This approach enhances preparation for the English for Specific Purposes examination and Krok 1 test items and contributes to the further development of English terminological competence.

Thus, the gradual development of students' English medical terminological competence enables progression from learning professional vocabulary to

its clinical application. This integration of academic disciplines creates conditions for students to effectively prepare for the examinations included in the first stage of the USQE, particularly Krok 1 and the English for Specific Purposes.

The gradual development of students' English medical terminological competence, implemented in the educational process of medical institutions of higher education, follows the principle of increasing complexity of learning content. At the initial stage, students learn basic vocabulary; at the next stage, they apply it in English-language professionally oriented texts and test items; at the final stage, they use it in clinical situations related to real medical practice. This approach corresponds to the CLIL framework, which combines language learning with the mastering subject-specific knowledge (Coyle, 2007).

The cognitive aspect of English medical terminological competence involves the development of strategies for rapid information analysis, identification of key task elements, and logical elimination of incorrect answer options. Researchers emphasise that effective medical vocabulary acquisition largely depends on active cognitive processing and the contextual use of terms (Nation, 2013). This is particularly relevant in the context of test-based examinations, where limited time requires the automated use of language knowledge.

Thus, the analysis of theoretical approaches and their practical implementation demonstrates that students' performance in the English for Specific Purposes examination largely depends on the combination of gradual mastering of professional vocabulary, the use of clinically oriented tasks, and the development of strategies for processing English-language medical information. The approaches outlined above provide the basis for students' readiness to take the USQE, particularly the English for Specific Purposes examination.

Conclusions. The development of English medical terminological competence is characterised by the integration of learning professional vocabulary, its interpretation within an English-language medical context, and its application in clinically oriented situations. These components are essential for successful performance in the English for Specific Purposes examination as part of the first stage of the USQE. The main challenges in students' preparation for the examination include understanding English-language clinical contexts, identifying key information, and selecting the correct answer option in test items.

The results of the research demonstrate the effectiveness of the gradual approach to the development of English terminological competence within the educational process of medical institutions of higher education. In particular, at I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University, the development of this competence is realised through

a system of courses provided by the Department of Foreign Languages: in the first year, the English for Specific Purposes course; in the second year, elective courses aimed at enhancing students' proficiency in medical terminology and developing their ability to successfully perform the tasks of the English for Specific Purposes examination; and in the third year, clinically oriented courses that integrate language and professional training. This structure facilitates a gradual progression from learning basic medical vocabulary to its functional application in professional and clinically oriented situations.

Thus, this approach to developing English terminological competence ensures the integration of language and professional components of learning, enhances students' ability to analyse English-language medical information, and supports the successful completion of the first stage of the USQE, particularly the English for Specific Purposes examination and Krok 1 test items requiring the application of professional terminology.

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Information on the use of artificial intelligence. The authors certify that, in the course of conducting the research and preparing this manuscript, they did not use any generative artificial intelligence tools or services to perform any of the tasks listed in the Generative Artificial Intelligence Delegation Taxonomy (GAIDeT, 2025). All stages of the work – from conceptualization to final editing – were carried out exclusively by the authors, without the use of generative artificial intelligence.

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