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ROLE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN HEALTHCARE (CASE STUDY IN LOCAL POLYCLINICS)

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Abstract:

In recent years, the integration of language skills into medical care has transformed traditional healthcare methodologies. This study examines the impact of foreign languages—such as Russian, English, German, and Turkish—on medical careers. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative assessments and qualitative feedback from polyclinic doctors. Results indicate that the knowledge of language enhances doctor motivation, promotes attending international conferences and trainings, and supports communicative competence. The study concludes with practical solutions and recommendations for the easy learning of languages.

Keywords: Language skills, polyclinics, out-patient, training, educational centre,

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Introduction:

In today's multicultural and multilingual society, the healthcare sector provides care for a diverse array of patients, each with unique linguistic backgrounds and cultural nuances. Effective communication is vital in the field of medicine, and bilingualism is a crucial skill that helps medical professionals provide high-quality care that transcends linguistic obstacles and gaps.

The rapid development of medical science and the increasing integration of global healthcare practices have significantly expanded the need for foreign language proficiency among medical professionals. Today, more than 70% of international scientific publications in medicine appear in English, making it the primary language of science, research, and technological innovation (Johnson, 2022). In such a context, the ability to navigate foreign-language medical resources has become not only a desirable skill but also a professional necessity. Foreign language proficiency allows medical students and practitioners to access up-to-date clinical recommendations, understand diagnostic protocols, and follow international standards such as ICD, DSM, and FDA guidelines. It also facilitates participation in international events, academic mobility programs, and joint research initiatives. Therefore, English is increasingly considered a core component of medical competence and clinical literacy.

This research aims to analyze the role of foreign language proficiency in acquiring medical information, communication within the professional community, and participation in international conferences.¹ In Uzbekistan, most of the professional doctors had studied in universities just after the independence of Uzbekistan. As Uzbekistan was part of the USSR, these healthcare workers were disciples of Russian doctors or Soviet-time professionals. This is because, in the Soviet Union, first under Stalin and then under his successors Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the nationalities were subjected to unrelenting pressures of Russification. Language policy was based on the assumption that the country was

¹Ravshanovna, Zaripova. (2025). THE ROLE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN ACQUIRING MEDICAL INFORMATION. *Advances in Science and Humanities*. 1. 53-56. 10.70728/human.v01.i10.014.

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headed toward social homogeneity and that sooner or later everyone would be speaking the same language, Russian. Just as the Russians dominated the society, so was their language at the top of the linguistic pecking order. Those who did not master Russian were at a disadvantage, particularly in getting access to jobs and higher education and in dealing with officials. The importance of studying Russian is made very clear by this statement. Even while Central Asians continued to speak their own native tongues, the overwhelming notion that Russian was necessary to find work or receive higher education was unable to be ignored.² The younger generation of doctors is now training themselves to be the best. The additional recognition for having a language certificate in medical universities motivates the youngsters to learn more foreign languages. Having strong language skills gives a lot of advantages to Uzbek doctors. First of all, not all the medical resources are translated into the Uzbek language. Knowing Russian and English is the demand of the time, and it is a key to most of the medical books.

Methods

Primary data was collected via survey to determine the level of language skills of the healthcare professionals and their opinions about the advantages of foreign languages in local polyclinics of Namangan and Tashkent. The survey aimed to identify the opportunities created by languages doctors know and explore possible ways of language learning growth among doctors. The survey consisted of 6 multiple-choice questions with “other” options. The questions were based on both existing knowledge of language and the opportunities created by language learning. The goal was to survey doctors in the local outpatient clinics of 2 cities. A doctor is defined as a person who has studied medicine as a major and works in a hospital. The survey was done online using Google Forms. Participants were invited via email and social media platforms. An introductory paragraph

² Reeve, Bethany A., "The Fate of the Language is the Fate of the People: A Cultural Analysis of Language Education Policy in Central Asia" (2023). Senior Theses. 592. https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses/592

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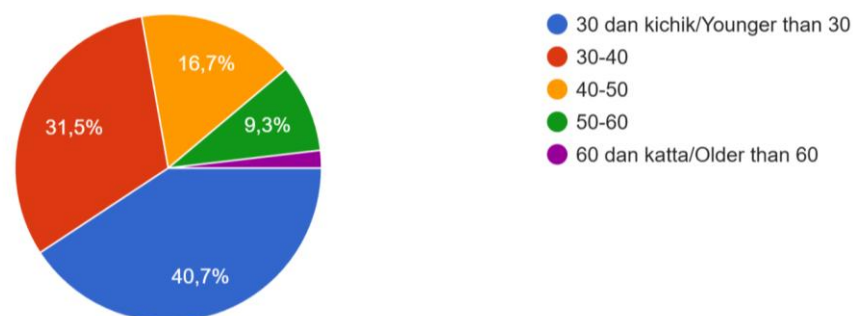
explained the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality, and provided instructions for completing the survey. Participation was voluntary, and no identifying information was collected. It took participants 10 minutes on average to complete the survey, and 47 doctors responded that they know at least 1 foreign language. Before analysis, the information was checked for validity and adequacy. The cross-sectional survey also enabled the inclusion of a diverse group of medical professionals from different age levels. This allowed us to have a broader understanding of how childhood factors might affect doctors of different ages at polyclinics. The study was conducted under the ethical research principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), emphasizing informed consent and confidentiality.

Results:

The survey included responses from 54 doctors of Namangan and Tashkent polyclinics. Of these, 47 reported knowing at least one foreign language. Figure 1 shows the distribution of these respondents across different age levels.

Yoshingiz nechada?/How old are you?

54 отбета



The highest proportion of doctors in polyclinics was found in **the age level younger than 30 (40.7%)**, followed by **30-40 (31.5%)**, whereas the lowest proportion was observed **in the level older than 60 (1.9%)**. A significant

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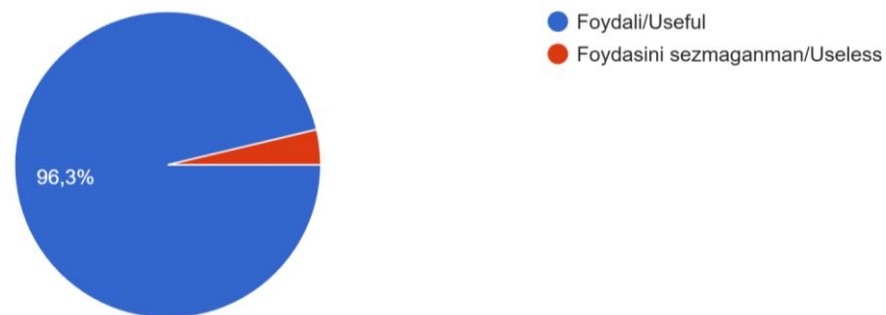
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majority (**96.3%**) of healthcare professionals reported that their language skills were helpful in their work and career, linking it to using medical resources of foreign scientists, training abroad, and networking with international experts. In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents (2 doctors) identified foreign language as useless in the polyclinics. Figure 2 illustrates hospital workers' perceptions of the usefulness of language in polyclinics.

Til bilish poliklinikadagi faoliyatingizga va karyerangizga qanday ta'sir qiladi deb o'ylaysiz?/How do you think language skills effect your work in policlinics and your career?

54 ОТВЕТА



The benefits of language varied among the surveyed workers. The most common benefits were understanding the instructions and ingredients of the drugs better (48.1%) and using medical resources of foreign countries (44.4%), while fewer doctors reported that language was useful for them in terms of training abroad (40.7%) and networking with international experts (37%).

Til bilish qobiliyati sizga sohangiz doirasida qanday imkoniyatlar yaratgan yoki yaratadi deb o'ylaysiz?/How do language skills help your work?

54 ОТВЕТА



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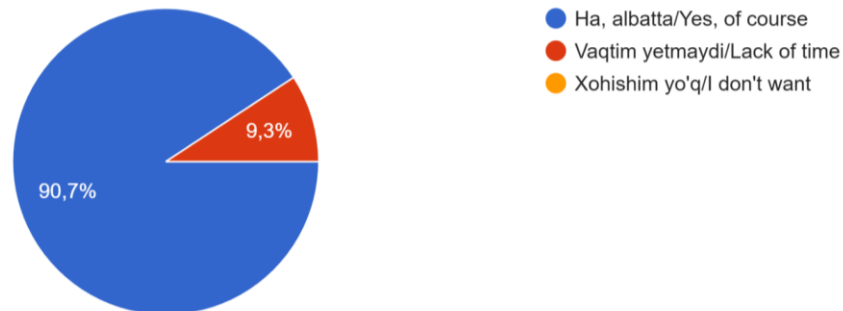
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The survey results indicate that most medical professionals would learn a new language if they had a chance. A smaller group, consisting of 5 respondents (9.3%), mentioned that they do not have enough time to learn a language.

Agar sizga imkoniyat yaratilganda qo'shimcha til o'rgangan bo'larmidingiz?/Would you learn a new language if you had a chance?

54 ОТВЕТА



The survey results revealed that the majority of polyclinic doctors believe that the best way of learning a new language is attending the classes of the educational center near the hospital. One-third of the respondents (31.5%) reported preferring the educational center, while an additional 24.1% stated that they want to develop language skills via online platforms. The lowest proportion of the healthcare professionals (11.1%) would like to learn a language by working with colleagues who know foreign languages. Training with language experts (18.5%) and videolessons (14.8%) were other ways of gaining language knowledge preferred by some of the respondents.

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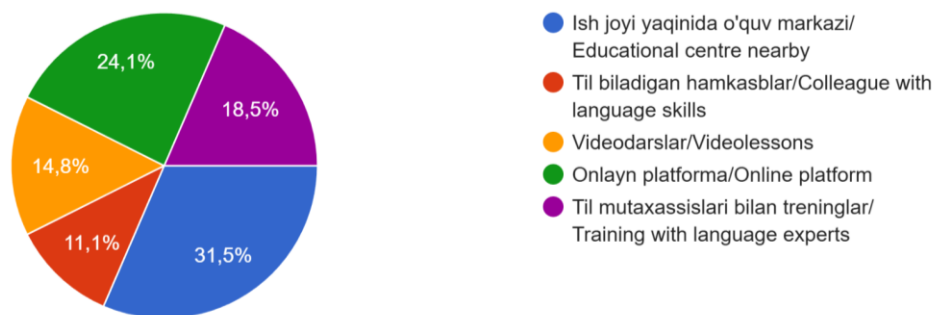


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Sizga qo'shimcha til o'rganish imkoniyatlari yaratilganida qaysi birini tanlagan bo'lardingiz?/Which one of the below would you choose if you had a chance.

54 ОТВЕТА



Discussion

The objective of the study was to research the level of language proficiency in medical staff of Namangan and Tashkent polyclinics by surveying a group of individuals aged 30-60 years and proposing ways to develop language skills. This study showed that using medical resources of foreign countries and training abroad Networking with international experts and understanding the instructions and ingredients of the drugs better are the benefits associated with language proficiency, supporting similar previous work. According to the survey results, the highest proportion of healthcare workers know Russian (57.4%). During the period of Soviet rule, the promotion of the Russian language posed a significant challenge to the preservation of the Uzbek language and cultural heritage.³ Even after 35 years, the Uzbek nation has the impact of the Soviet Union. Today's medical professionals had studied at school a little after the independence, which means most of them studied under the Russian experts or Russian-knowing teachers. The results showed that English is the second most common language among doctors, with 42.6%. This is because while they were studying at the university or medical schools, the additional scholarships were introduced for medical students having a language certificate with at least B2-level proficiency.

³ Odilov B, Karimov N. 2023 Jan 1. A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of Soviet Rule on the Cultural Identity of Uzbekistan. Science and Technology Publications.:1250–1256. doi:10.5220/0012963300003882. <https://doi.org/10.5220/0012963300003882>.

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⁴ Additionally, in Uzbekistan now, at schools, English is taught as a foreign language. So most of the healthcare students are interested and try to get an English language certificate at the university.

The benefits gained by language varied among the respondents. Since everybody has different environments and goals, the benefits of language are different. According to a survey conducted for ACTFL, employers in healthcare and social assistance sectors greatly value professionals with foreign language skills due to their high demand. The primary objective remains equipping healthcare staff with the necessary language skills and cultural awareness to communicate effectively, deliver quality care, and provide accurate treatment, regardless of patients' language or cultural background. ⁵

Strengths and Limitations

This study has several limitations, including sample size and generalizability. Only 54 doctors from 2 large cities responded, so these findings can't be representative of a broader medical population. Also, as an outpatient hospital, its unique environment may not reflect other clinics, with professionals having quite different lifestyles and work patterns. In addition, they are likely to engage more in communication with patients from different language backgrounds. This might result in an overestimation of language levels.

Solutions. Since 90.7% of the medical staff has a desire to learn a new language, many ways can be offered for them:

1. Educational center near the polyclinic (31.5%). The Language Resource Centre aims to improve communication competency of learners. It prepares the

⁴ ANNEX 2 to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4666 dated April 7, 2020 PQ-4666-сон 07.04.2020. Tibbiy-sanitariya sohasida kadrlarni tayyorlash va uzluksiz kasbiy rivojlantirishning mutlaqo yangi tizimini joriy etish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida. <https://lex.uz/docs/-4782939#-4783018>.

⁵ Martínez M, Martínez M. 2025. How language proficiency can lead to quality healthcare. LTI Blog - Certify your language skills anytime, anywhere. <https://www.languagetesting.com/blog/elevating-your-language-proficiency-and-role-in-delivering-quality-healthcare/>.

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target learners for the job market and also for international certificate courses such as the Medical English Certificate and IELTS. ⁶

2. Online platforms (24.1%) and video lessons (14.8%). The use of digital tools enhances learner motivation, promotes autonomous learning, and supports communicative competence. ⁷ As workers have less time to study languages, apps and websites can be a good way of learning languages while going to work or coming home also.

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