A REVIEW OF THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS, SATISFACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF AN EMP COURSE AS REFLECTED IN THE RESULTS OF A STUDENT OPINION SURVEY (2019/2020; 2020/2021)

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Abstract. The research presented in this paper is based on the results from 3 conducted student opinion surveys among a total number of 82 students of Medicine who attended the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer and who agreed to fill in an anonymous student opinion survey that included questions about their EMP course after they had completed it.

The 2019/2020 student opinion survey included 21 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and 2 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process and what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process.

This paper presents the summarized student assessments given on the 2019/2020 student opinion survey by 61 students who attended the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna during the 2019/2020 academic year.

In 2020/2021, 2 separate student opinion surveys were conducted: one official survey that included 20 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and 2 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process and what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process; one unofficial extended survey that included the same 21 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) as in the 2019/2020 survey and 9 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process, what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process and which particular teaching strategies, types of exercises and provided additional materials they found most useful for themselves and why.

This paper presents the summarized student assessments given on the official 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 17 students who attended the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna during the 2020/2021 academic year, as well as the summarized student assessments given on the unofficial extended 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 4 students who attended the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna during the 2020/2021 academic year.

INTRODUCTION

Until the 2019/2020 academic year, the EMP course offered at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna was structured mostly around the main course textbook used – Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House – and the author Tsvetelina Vateva had little data about the additional materials that may have been utilized by the lecturers conducting the EMP course to supplement the main course textbook before 2019.

Thus, during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years when the author Tsvetelina Vateva was assigned as a new lecturer to teach the EMP discipline, she decided to create, collect and utilize some new additional materials to supplement the main textbook that was still used for the course – Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House.

The authors of this main course textbook have managed to structure it in a very logical and comprehensive way with regard to the included medical topics: the textbook consists of 12 units that encompass teaching materials related to all major human body systems, the different types of diseases that affect them, as well as other relevant medical topics, which are a definite object of interest for the students of Medicine attending the specialized course in English for Medical Purposes. As the authors themselves have indicated on the back cover of the textbook, "it contains a wide range of activities developing the receptive and productive psycholinguistic skills and strategies: reading, listening, writing and speaking" (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V., 2009), while "the tasks allow the students to enrich their vocabulary in English as well as recycle and consolidate grammar typical for medical contexts" (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V., 2009).

However, as two of the authors of the textbook have also pointed out in one of their articles entitled "Natural Recycling of Grammar While Teaching Medical English", "the students who study English for Medicine, Dental Medicine, Obstetrics, Pharmacy and other Health Care subjects at Varna Medical University in Bulgaria are usually in mixed-level groups" (Raynova, Valentina Angelova, Trendafilova, Svetla Dimitrova, 2013), and "since they are at different levels of language proficiency, the students are at a different stage of language acquisition and understandably they have different needs" (Raynova, Valentina Angelova, Trendafilova, Svetla Dimitrova, 2013). Therefore, "because it is difficult to find adequate books on the market that meet the special requirements of this specific context of teaching and learning English for medical purposes, there emerges a dire necessity for designing and writing our own materials" (Raynova, Valentina Angelova, Trendafilova, Svetla Dimitrova, 2013).

It was precisely this "dire necessity" (Raynova, Valentina Angelova, Trendafilova, Svetla Dimitrova, 2013) for trying to provide suitable materials to all students from the mixed-level groups attending the EMP course during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer that led the author to create, collect and utilize some new additional materials to supplement the topics of the main textbook and try to make the EMP course as useful as possible for both the more advanced students and the students with lower levels of English language proficiency.

These new supplemental materials created, collected and utilized in the EMP course during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years by the author Tsvetelina Vateva included:

- detailed English-Bulgarian glossaries compiled and translated by the author Tsvetelina Vateva that contained the most essential vocabulary (both medical and general) from the materials included in each of the 12 units of the main course textbook (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House);
- additional short explanations with short general examples of the included grammatical topics in the 12 units of the main course textbook (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House);
- additional texts related to some of the discussed medical topics in the 12 units of the main course textbook (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House) with detailed English-Bulgarian glossaries compiled and translated by the author Tsvetelina Vateva that contained the most essential vocabulary (both medical and general) from the provided additional texts;
- additional images illustrating the main and secondary parts of the major systems in the human body, as well as the most important processes that occur within these human body systems, with detailed English-Bulgarian glossaries compiled and translated by the author Tsvetelina Vateva that contained the medical terminology included in the provided additional images;
- additional videos providing further explanations related to some of the discussed medical topics in the 12 units of the main course textbook (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House);
- additional short texts related to some of the discussed medical topics in the 12 units of the main course textbook (Dokova, A., Trendafilova, S., Angelova, V. (2009). *English for Medicine*, Varna, STENO Publishing House) that were provided to the students as optional sources of information for the purposes of writing short summaries of some of these additional texts for assessment;
- additional general reference materials from a medical dictionary that included a list of the most widely used prefixes, roots and suffixes in medical terminology; a list of the most widely used medical abbreviations; a list of the names of the most widely used laboratory samples and tests; and a copy of the International Phonetic Alphabet;
- additional writing reference materials including excellent samples of the different types of short writing tasks that the students were required to fulfil for assessment;
- an additional short English-Bulgarian glossary of US army and navy basic military equipment compiled and translated by the author Tsvetelina Vateva; an additional short English-Bulgarian glossary of weapons terminology compiled and translated by the author Tsvetelina Vateva; a list of useful links to databases of military terms and abbreviations – all compiled and utilized by the author Tsvetelina Vateva for the specific needs of 2 of the groups of students of Medicine specializing in Military Medicine.

All of these described additional materials were uploaded by the author Tsvetelina Vateva to the Blackboard electronic teaching platform used by the university, where all students of Medicine attending the EMP course could access, download and use them freely at all times. Then, at the end of the EMP course during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, the students were provided with an opportunity to fill in anonymous students opinion surveys and share their assessments of whether and to what extent this additional-material-upgraded EMP course with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as its conducting lecturer had been useful and suitable to their needs and had met their initial expectations.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 anonymous student opinion survey results are presented in this paper with the aim to compare the 2019/2020 with the 2020/2021 student assessments given for both the additional material-upgraded EMP course and the author Tsvetelina Vateva as its conducting lecturer.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to draw conclusions regarding the extent to which the additional-material-upgraded EMP course offered to the students of Medicine at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov – Varna during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as its conducting lecturer satisfied the mixed-level students' specific English language needs and met the students' initial expectations for the course.

The paper also aims to present the students' opinions and recommendations for possible improvements of the structure and content of the offered EMP course with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as its conducting lecturer.

METHODOLOGY

The 2019/2020 student opinion survey included 21 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and 2 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process and what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process. The 21 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) included in the 2019/2020 student opinion survey were presented to the students in the following order:

1.There is an adequate amount of course content, the lectures and the seminars are meaningful and informative.

2. The lectures and the seminars are clearly structured.

3. A variety of audio-visual aids and media (audio/video, movies, Blackboard) are used.

4. The topics and the resources used in the foreign-language module were up-to-date, engaging and interesting.

5. The seminar time is used properly; current issues are discussed.

6. The instructional materials are sufficient.

7.1 During the seminars, I was provided with sufficient opportunities to practice my listening comprehension skills.

7.2 During the seminars, I was provided with sufficient opportunities to practice my speaking skills.

7.3 During the seminars, I was provided with sufficient opportunities to practice my reading comprehension skills.

7.4 During the seminars, I was provided with sufficient opportunities to practice my writing skills.

8. I got a good feeling of my learning progress.

9. I was provided with sufficient sources and additional materials for self-study.

10. The teaching pace was exactly right for me.

11. The content of the test tasks was directly linked to the course content and instruction.

12. There was a good learning atmosphere and I could concentrate efficiently.

13. The seminars began and ended on time.

14. The lecturer was always well-prepared.

15. The lecturer acted friendly and respectfully towards the students.

16. The lecturer responded to the questions comprehensively and motivated the students to participate actively.

17. The lecturer was interested in the students' learning progress.

18. The students felt free to express their opinions during the seminars.

The official 2020/2021 student opinion survey included 20 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and 2 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process and what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process. The first 19 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) included in the official 2020/2021 student opinion survey were the same and were presented to the students in the same order as questions 1-16 of the 2019/2020 student opinion survey presented above. The 20th Likert-scale question that came under No. 17 in the official 2020/2021 student opinion survey was formulated as follows:

17. The teaching style helps me improve my learning attitudes, behaviour and motivation.

The unofficial extended 2020/2021 student opinion survey included the same 21 Likert-scale questions for assessment on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) as in the 2019/2020 survey presented above and 9 open-ended questions that prompted the students to write in their own words what they liked most about the conducted teaching process, what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process and which particular teaching strategies employed by their lecturer (including provided preliminary guidelines and instructions for fulfilment of their different types of writing assignments; provided preliminary guidelines and instructions for preparation and delivery of their oral presentations; provided samples of successfully fulfilled writing tasks and students' presentations from previous years; provided feedback regarding each of their fulfilled writing assignments; constant working-hours availability of the lecturer for email consultations), as well as which types of listening, reading, writing and speaking exercises and which of the additional materials uploaded on Blackboard by their lecturer they found most useful for themselves and why.

The summarized student assessments given on the 2019/2020 student opinion survey by 61 students who attended the EMP course during the 2019/2020 academic year, the summarized student assessments given on the official 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 17 students who attended the EMP course during the 2020/2021 academic year and the summarized student assessments given on the unofficial extended 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 4 students who attended the EMP course during the 2020/2021 academic year with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer are presented and discussed below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The summarized student assessments given on the 21 Likert scale questions of the 2019/2020 student opinion survey by 61 students who attended the EMP course during the 2019/2020 academic year with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer are presented in Table 1 below.

The summarized student assessments given on the 20 Likert scale questions of the official 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 17 students who attended the EMP course during the 2020/2021 academic year with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer are presented in Table 2 below.

The summarized student assessments given on the 21 Likert scale questions of the unofficial extended 2020/2021 student opinion survey by 4 students who attended the EMP course during the 2020/2021 academic year with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as their lecturer are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 1 – 2019/2020 summarized results from the 21 Likert scale questions – 61 student assessments

2019/2020 Survey Question No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of ass. 5 (fully agree)	46	48	58	52	46	51	52	45	54	42	42	50	53	52	46	55	59	59	57	56	56
No. of ass. 4 (agree)	11	11	2	9	10	7	7	8	6	10	12	9	6	9	11	5	1	2	3	5	4
No. of ass. 3 (average/neutral)	3	2	1	0	5	2	1	4	0	6	7	1	2	0	4	1	1	0	1	0	1
No. of ass. 2 (disagree)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of ass. 1 (fully disagree)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2 – 2020/2021 summarized results from the 20 Likert scale questions of the official 2020/2021 survey – 17 student assessments

2020/2021 Official Survey Question No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
No. of ass. 5 (fully agree)	9	11	11	13	14	13	10	11	12	11	10	12	11	13	12	14	17	17	16	15
No. of ass. 4 (agree)	5	6	3	4	2	3	6	3	5	6	6	4	4	2	2	3	0	0	1	1
No. of ass.	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

3 (average/neutral)																				
No. of ass. 2 (disagree)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
No. of ass. 1 (fully disagree)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3 – 2020/2021 summarized results from the 21 Likert scale questions of the unofficial extended 2020/2021 survey – 4 student assessments

2020/2021 Unofficial Extended Survey Question No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of ass. 5 (fully agree)	4	4	2	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
No. of ass. 4 (agree)	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of ass. 3 (average/neutral)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of ass. 2 (disagree)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of ass. 1 (fully disagree)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The most frequent answers to the open-ended questions regarding what the students liked most about the conducted teaching process and what they would suggest for optimization of the teaching process given among the total number of 82 students who completed the 3 presented student opinion surveys during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years are included in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Most frequent student answers to the open-ended questions about the best-liked teaching practices and recommendations for course optimization – 2019/2020 and 2020/2021

What did you like most about the teaching process?	What are your suggestions for optimization of the teaching process?
- the lecturer's teaching approach/methodology – 32 answers - the lecturer's attitude and behaviour towards the students – 25 answers - the additional materials provided by	- nothing needs to be changed; the course is optimized as it is – 26 answers - separate the groups according to their English language proficiency

the lecturer – 21 answers	level – 5 answers
• the whole course content and structure – 17 answers	• introduce more types of speaking tasks – 4 answers
• the pleasant learning atmosphere – 5 answers	• reduce the seminar duration; give more breaks – 3 answers

The 4 students who completed the lecturer's 2020/2021 unofficial extended student opinion survey gave the following summarized answers to the additional 7 open-ended questions regarding the particular teaching strategies, types of exercises and provided additional materials they found most useful for themselves:

- most useful lecturer's teaching strategies: all listed strategies (2 answers); guidelines and instructions for oral presentations (1 answer); guidelines and instructions for writing assignments (1 answer);
- most useful types of exercises: listening multiple choice (4 answers); listening True/False (1 answer); listening gap-fill (1 answer); listening open-ended questions (1 answer); reading True/False (3 answers); reading gap-fill (3 answers); reading multiple choice (1 answer); reading missing-sentence-filling (1 answer); reading missing-paragraph-filling (1 answer); writing an essay (1 answer); writing a summary (1 answer); writing a referral letter for a patient (1 answer); all writing task types (1 answer); speaking – oral presentation (3 answers); speaking – group discussions (1 answer);
- most useful additional materials provided by the lecturer: all provided additional materials (2 answers); the provided additional texts (1 answer); the provided English-Bulgarian glossaries for each unit of the textbook (1 answer).

CONCLUSION

As it is evident from the results of the 3 presented student opinion surveys, the 82 students' assessments of the additional-material-upgraded EMP course that was offered to them with the author Tsvetelina Vateva as its conducting lecturer are predominantly high (with most Likert scale assessments of 5 = fully agree or 4 = agree and mostly positive feedback on the open-ended questions) for both the upgraded course structure and content and the lecturer's teaching methodology, strategies, approaches and attitude to the students.

These high assessments are an indisputable indicator that both the offered upgraded EMP course and the lecturer managed to meet the students' expectations and the mixed-level language needs of the majority of both the more advanced students and the students with lower levels of English language proficiency who attended the presented EMP course during the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 academic years.

REFERENCES

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