***Iryna Korneyko***

*Kharkiv National Medical University*

**THE LANGUAGE OF MEDICAL CASE DESCRIPTION ON MEDICAL FORUMS**

Medical forums as a means of professional communication in the field of medicine are popular due to easy access, rapid information exchange, possibility to discuss the question with the specialists all over the world. Therefore, the ability to describe and discuss a medical case on an Internet forum is a mandatory linguistic skill for a medical practitioner.

As a preliminary stage of teaching writing case presentations, we investigated the linguistic features of case descriptions on medical Internet forums doctorshangout.com and figure1.com using the technique of ESP genre analysis [1; 2]. This communicative community includes medical practitioners, teachers of medicine or those being trained to become a medical practitioner. The means of information exchange is the Internet. The message is a typed text which is neither edited, nor reviewed. The communication with the purpose to discuss complicated, interesting or rare cases with the colleagues and getting their opinion or advice on the diagnosis, treatment, follow-up is open to everybody belonging to the profession irrespective of the experience, qualifications, place of work, degrees.

The structure of a case description on a medical forum is similar to that of the case report in a medical journal described earlier [3], which, apparently, is influenced by professional training, as the guidelines (templates) on case report writing can be found on the sites of medical journals, medical faculties and colleges. These texts attributed to a narrative genre are built following the logical consequence *problem-solution,* butthesolution itself is replaced by a question. The text can be shaped both in a direct sequence, when the problem description is followed by the question and a reverse one: the text opens with a question followed by the problem description. The logical structure is accomplished in such moves: 1) problem, 2) search for solution, 3) question about solution (move 2 is not compulsory) with the steps similar to those of formal case presentation [3, с. 134], but only relevant are present.

The text starts with the demographic data of the patient, usually referred to as *woman, man, male, female, patient, boy, girl, baby,* his/her age, past history, followed by the complaints description. The collocations typical for the language of medicine (*presented with* SIGN) are widely used. Extensive use of abbreviations, identifying names, medical slang (*work up of the patient*) is common. The grammar is characterized by the use of both Past Simple (*A 30yrs old male presented to ED having c/o involuntary leg muscles spasm*) and Present Simple (*9 yo F presents in clinic with sore throat*), omission of the subject (*Took amoxicillin 3 years ago with no problems*), contracted questions (*Your diagnosis/treatment?*), the use of the first person pronouns (*my patient, our hospital*), absence of articles.

The revealed features should be considered by the teachers planning an ESP (medicine) course. Our findings suggest that due to the similarity of the messages on medical Internet forums and case reports published in medical journals, it is not necessary to spend plenty of time teaching writing the massages in an ESP class. On the other hand, the informal character of communication gives the opportunity to start teaching A2 students writing case reports with writing messages for medical forums; the communication success at this level can motivate the students. The question whether the messages should be regarded a separate genre requires further in-depth investigation.

References

1. Swales J.M. Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. – 274 p.

2. Bhatia V.K. Analyzing genre: language use in professional settings. London: Longman; 1993. – 193 p.

3. Korneyko I.V. Medical case description: a genre-analytical approach. – Методологія та практика лінгвістичної підготовки іноземних студентів: Збірник матеріалів Всукраїнської науково-практичної конференції. 19 квітня 2017 р.- Харків: ХНМУ, 2017. – С. 131-139.