



## Medical Discourse in Professional, Academic and Popular Settings.

**Pilar Ordóñez-López, Nuria Edo-Marzá (eds).**

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*Medical Discourse in Professional, Academic and Popular Settings* is a newly edited volume by PILAR ORDÓÑEZ-LÓPEZ and NURIA EDO-MARZÁ and published by Multilingual Matters, particularly as part of the series *Language at Work*, which, in general terms, seeks to disseminate workplace research. The edited volume reviewed here represents an updated collection of chapters that explore medical discourse from various perspectives. Medical discourse, as shown in this volume, appears not to be exclusively limited to health professionals; rather, it is part of a wider audience, including, for example, patients or professionals of different fields. Nowadays, medical discourse is somehow more accessible to the general public (Pilegaard, 2007) and medical knowledge is then part of society, who may make judgements and evaluate it (Weingart, 2002). This particular edited volume is a relevant and welcome contribution that serves to understand how medical discourse is constructed as well as to reflect upon the issue of successful medical communication.

This edited volume consists of nine chapters, including an introductory chapter by the editors. In Chapter 1, PILAR ORDÓÑEZ-LÓPEZ and NURIA EDO-MARZÁ present a brief overview on medical discourse, discuss the importance of conducting research in this particular area, and report how this type of discourse has evolved from a more professionally-oriented perspective towards an interactive and social perspective. This introductory chapter also serves to provide an overview of the chapters included in the edited volume.

As reported in what follows, Chapter 2 focuses on the study of textual variation in medical discourse; Chapter 3 and 4 centre on different medical genres, training and the importance of developing communication skills; Chapter 5 and 6 examine textual genres that are particularly addressed to patients; Chapter 7 and 8 focus on the use of metaphors in medical discourse on cancer; and finally, Chapter 9 explores the use of metaphors in the discourse of mindfulness.

Chapter 2, by MAURIZIO GOTTI, examines variation in medical discourse used for academic purposes. Following a corpus-based approach, the author examines the relationship between sociocultural identity factors and textual variation. The author presents an overview of the evolution of medical discourse in academic contexts, a revision of some current projects that focus on specialised discourse in English in different academic areas, and discusses the results of the CERLIS project. This study reveals that the affiliation of writers (professional, ideological or ethnic-geographic) seems to influence medical discourse and participants' rhetorical positioning.

In Chapter 3, VICENT SALVADOR explores the structure and content of clinical case reports, which can be found in some specialised academic periodicals and consist of the written story of the patient. This study shows that clinical case reports, as a medical narrative, may serve to construct patient identity. The author suggests that the inclusion of clinical case reports as a genre in medical journals may contribute to the elaboration of a more personalised, albeit scientific, discourse. The pedagogical value of clinical case reports for students and professionals is also highlighted here.

Chapter 4, by BEGOÑA BELLÉS-FORTUÑO, presents a corpus-based analysis of two different types of genres, particularly scientific research articles and popular science articles. The author attempts to compare and contrast these two genres in terms of evaluative language and discourse markers to explore whether popular science articles can be pedagogically appropriate for health science students. This study shows that popular science articles, which tend to be less complex than scientific research articles, can be regarded as a suitable pedagogical tool for health science students, especially in their first academic courses, when students' knowledge of scientific academic writing is still scarce.

In Chapter 5, MORTEN PILEGAARD examines ethics in authentic informed consent documents from an integrative perspective, which involves drawing on systemic functional linguistics, genre theory, translation theory and discourse analysis. This study reveals that there is a general lack of ethicalness, showing, for example, instances of structural patterns, choice of lexical items, and pragmatic choices that may be inappropriate. Furthermore, it is observed that, in general, communication between the professional and the addressee seems to lack appropriateness. The author argues that a patient-centred perspective is fundamental and that communication should be adapted to patient knowledge and information needs.

Chapter 6, by VICENT MONTALT and ISABEL GARCÍA-IZQUIERDO, focuses on oral and written modes from a holistic perspective, particularly following a translation studies perspective to identify cultural and conceptual asymmetries between patients and doctors. Also, drawing on the Calgary-Cambridge Guide, the authors attempt to identify the interaction between these two modes in consultation genre. This study suggests that written and visual information can benefit oral consultations, and identifies various principles and criteria concerning patient's perspective, timing for information delivery and comprehensibility, which, in turn, may be exploited from research and pedagogical perspectives.

In Chapter 7, IGNASI NAVARRO I FERRANDO conducts a corpus-based study that seeks to explore cognitive functions of metaphors (e.g. categorisation and conceptualisation) and discourse communicative functions (e.g. deliberate and novel usage) in research papers, scientific news and press articles in which the topic of cancer is addressed. This study shows a characterisation of metaphor use across the three genres and suggests that the use of metaphors seems to be genre-specific. For example, the author finds that in more specialised genres metaphors tend to be used more unconsciously, whereas in press articles they are used more deliberately.

Chapter 8, by MARTÍ DOMÍNGUEZ and LUCÍA SAPIÑA, examines metaphors in medical discourse on cancer in Spanish press in order to see how they contribute to shape an image of the disease. To do so, the authors focus on three significant events that involve three famous sports personalities. As the authors report, war metaphors are commonly used to refer to cancer, thereby evoking a rather negative image of the disease. This study suggests that war metaphors are widely used in media discourse when cancer is addressed, even though some contexts allow for the use of other type of metaphors, such as sport metaphors.

Finally, in Chapter 9, ANTONIO-JOSÉ SILVESTRE-LÓPEZ presents a study that focuses on metaphors in the discourse of mindfulness. Following a cognitive linguistic approach, this study seeks to explore what the analysis of spoken discourse in mindfulness may show about the mental representations involved in the mindfulness experience and practice. This study reveals the activation of a set of idealised cognitive models, which can benefit discourse coherence and, therefore, expand participants' understanding. Analysing this type of discourse seems to serve to improve

mindfulness teaching practices effectiveness, while becoming a relevant data source for psychological experiments.

Overall, the chapters included in this edited volume are theoretically well-grounded from various perspectives and disciplines, and undoubtedly represent a relevant contribution to the field of medical discourse. At a personal level, I should state that medicine and health issues have attracted my interest, especially in recent years, and the chapters included in this edited volume have encouraged me to learn more about medical discourse from a research perspective. However, in reading the volume, one may notice that, despite the fact that the guiding thread of this edited volume is medical discourse, the multiple diversity of the aspects covered unfortunately seems to result in lack of homogeneity and unity. Taking into account this reality, it seems complex to envisage a concrete and homogeneous audience. Despite these limitations, this edited volume is an excellent contribution to the area of specialised language and therefore is highly recommendable to both researchers and language teachers whose academic and/or teaching interests lie in the specific domain of medicine discourse.

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