PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL TEXTS AS A MEDIUM FOR ADVANCING LEXICAL COMPETENCE IN ESP-BASED MEDICAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The development of lexical competence is essential for medical students learning English for professional purposes. This article examines how various types of professional medical texts—such as scientific articles, clinical reports, patient leaflets, medical journalism, and hospital documents—contribute to vocabulary acquisition in medical English. A pedagogical experiment conducted with undergraduate medical students demonstrates that genre-based learning significantly enhances vocabulary retention and contextual usage. The findings support the integration of diverse text types into the ESP curriculum to foster meaningful, profession-oriented language development.*

Key words: *medical English, lexical competence, ESP, professional texts, medical vocabulary, genre-based instruction*

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫЕ МЕДИЦИНСКИЕ ТЕКСТЫ КАК СРЕДСТВО РАЗВИТИЯ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В МЕДИЦИНСКОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ НА ОСНОВЕ ЭКЗАМЕНАЦИОННОГО СПЕЦИАЛИЗИРОВАННОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Аннотация: *Развитие лексической компетенции является ключевым аспектом обучения студентов-медиков английскому языку по профессиональному направлению. В статье анализируется влияние различных типов профессиональных медицинских текстов — научных статей, клинических отчетов, информационных буклетов для пациентов, медицинской журналистики и больничной документации — на усвоение медицинской лексики. Педагогический эксперимент, проведённый со студентами-медиками, показал, что обучение на основе жанров способствует лучшему запоминанию и уместному использованию терминов. Результаты подтверждают необходимость включения разнообразных текстов в курсы английского языка для профессиональных целей.*

Ключевые слова:*медицинский английский, лексическая компетенция, английский для профессиональных целей, профессиональные тексты, медицинская лексика, жанровый подход*

PROFESSIONAL TIBBIYOT MATNLARI TIBBIYOT TA’LIMIDA EKZAMENATSION MAXSUS TILI ASOSIDA LEKSIK KOMETENENTNI RIVOJLANTIRISH VOSITASI

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Annotatsiya:*Talabalar uchun ingliz tilida kasbiy leksikani o‘zlashtirish muhim hisoblanadi, ayniqsa tibbiyot yo‘nalishida. Ushbu maqolada turli janrdagi tibbiy matnlar — ilmiy maqolalar, klinik hisobotlar, bemorlar uchun risolalar, tibbiy jurnalistika va shifoxona hujjatlari — orqali leksik kompetensiyani rivojlantirish o‘rganiladi. Tibbiyot universiteti talabalarida o‘tkazilgan tajriba shuni ko‘rsatdiki, janrga asoslangan yondashuv so‘z boyligini mustahkamlash va kontekstda to‘g‘ri ishlatishga yordam beradi. Topilmalar ESP (kasbiy maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili) kurslarida har xil matn turlaridan foydalanishni tavsiya etadi.*

Kalit so‘zlar: *tibbiy ingliz tili, leksik kompetensiya, ESP, kasbiy matnlar, tibbiy atamalar, janrga asoslangan o‘qitish*

Introduction.

In the modern era of medical education, the acquisition of English-language lexical competence plays a central role in preparing students for global communication, academic research, and international clinical practice. While general English may

serve as a foundation, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses—particularly in medicine—must address the specialized and often complex vocabulary that healthcare professionals use. One of the most effective tools in this process is exposure to authentic professional medical texts.

These texts, which include scientific publications, clinical case reports, patient information brochures, journalistic articles, and institutional medical documents, represent distinct genres that offer different linguistic, stylistic, and terminological features. This study explores how different types of professional medical texts contribute to the development of students' lexical competence, both in terms of vocabulary range and contextual usage. The acquisition of domain-specific vocabulary is essential for success in both academic and clinical settings. As medical students increasingly engage in English-medium instruction and global discourse, the need for effective strategies to enhance lexical competence becomes critical. Research in applied linguistics (Bhat & Beri, 2016; Dutcher & Tucker, 1994) and immersion education (Snow, 1987; Genesee, 1994) supports the use of authentic, context-rich materials to promote language acquisition. This study examines how various genres of professional medical texts can be integrated into ESP instruction to support lexical development.

Methods.

Participants

Eighty-four first-year undergraduate students from a medical university participated in the study. All had completed a general English course and were enrolled in an ESP program focused on medical English. Their initial English level was assessed as B1–B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Text Types and Instructional Design

Five genres of professional medical texts were selected for the experiment:

Scientific articles (e.g., original research, reviews)

Clinical case reports

Patient education materials (e.g., brochures, leaflets)

Medical journalism (e.g., popular science articles from news media)

Hospital documentation (e.g., discharge summaries, consent forms)

Each genre was studied in a two-week module. Students completed tasks such as vocabulary extraction, paraphrasing, contextual guessing, word formation, and oral presentation. Pre- and post-tests measured lexical gains using a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). A questionnaire also gathered students' perceptions of each genre's difficulty, usefulness, and applicability.

Analysis and Results.

Lexical Acquisition

Quantitative analysis revealed the following gains in vocabulary acquisition:

Scientific articles: Students demonstrated a 28% improvement in productive use of academic and scientific vocabulary. This genre was particularly effective in introducing technical terms related to methodology, statistical interpretation, and evidence-based practice. Students were able to incorporate terms like "meta-analysis," "comorbidity," and "placebo-controlled trial" into their written and spoken responses. Notably, this improvement extended beyond recognition and included correct usage in context, suggesting deep lexical integration.

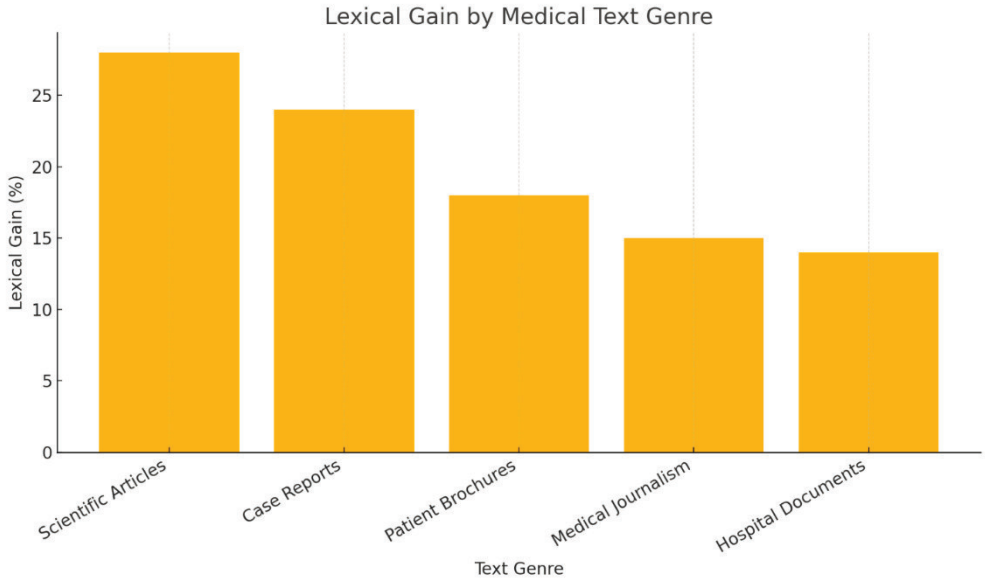
Case reports: A 24% increase was observed in the use of clinical and diagnostic terminology. Students engaged with narrative-driven case histories that contextualized vocabulary such as "presenting complaint," "differential diagnosis," and "treatment protocol." The structured yet human-centered nature of case reports made medical vocabulary more relatable and memorable. Many students began spontaneously using accurate clinical expressions in class discussions and presentations.

Patient brochures: An 18% gain was noted in students' ability to paraphrase and explain complex medical concepts using plain English. This genre emphasized simplification and audience awareness, with frequent use of expressions like "high blood pressure" instead of "hypertension" and "heart doctor" in place of "cardiologist." The improvement reflected students' enhanced capacity to adjust language register based on audience needs, a key component of communicative competence in clinical settings.

Medical journalism: Students showed a 15% increase in the spontaneous use of semi-formal, topic-specific vocabulary. Articles from sources like The BMJ News or MedPage Today exposed students to health news reporting and popularized science language, blending accuracy with accessibility. The vocabulary gain included terms such as "breakthrough," "emerging data," and "clinical relevance," which students successfully integrated into opinion-based writing tasks.

Hospital documents: Students achieved a 14% gain in recognizing and reproducing institutional phrasing and standardized language. This included phrases such as "discharge summary," "informed consent obtained," and "patient denied allergies." Such vocabulary was essential for familiarizing students with procedural documentation, a critical area in real-world clinical communication.

Graph 1.



Student Feedback

Students reported the following:

Scientific texts were the most challenging due to their dense structure and technical content, but they were also seen as the most beneficial for improving academic vocabulary retention. Many students expressed a sense of achievement after mastering key concepts and terminologies.

Case reports were considered the most engaging genre, appreciated for their realistic context and clinical relevance. Students valued the logical sequence and the opportunity to follow a patient's journey.

Patient leaflets helped students develop the ability to simplify medical information for non-specialist audiences. This skill was particularly relevant for future doctor-patient communication.

Journalistic texts were credited with enhancing reading fluency and improving the ability to quickly grasp core messages from a mix of professional and semi-formal registers.

Hospital documents taught students how to write in a formal, protocol-driven style and improved their familiarity with documentation practices in real hospital settings.

Students showed significant improvement in vocabulary across all genres. Scientific articles and clinical reports yielded the highest gains in productive vocabulary use (Israilova, 2022;). Patient brochures and medical journalism improved paraphrasing and lay-friendly expression. Hospital documents enhanced formal phrase recognition.

Discussion.

The data confirm that genre-specific exposure allows students to build a layered and versatile medical lexicon. While scientific articles introduce technical vocabulary in abstract contexts, clinical case reports offer vocabulary tied to real-world scenarios. Patient-facing materials introduce empathy and patient-friendly language, while hospital documents formalize institutional and procedural terminology.

This pedagogical approach emphasizes not only vocabulary acquisition but also genre awareness, helping students develop sensitivity to context, audience, and communicative purpose. Each genre activates distinct cognitive processes, encouraging students to shift between analytical reasoning, narrative logic, patient-centered communication, and administrative precision. As a result, students gain not only vocabulary breadth but also discourse flexibility.

Table 1.

Pedagogical contributions of medical text genres

Genre	Vocabulary Focus	Learning Function
Scientific Articles	Academic & Scientific Terminology	Promotes research literacy and precise expression
Case Reports	Clinical & Diagnostic Vocabulary	Develops diagnostic narrative and clinical reasoning
Patient Brochures	Layperson Terminology & Paraphrasing	Enhances patient education and simplification skills
Medical Journalism	Topic-Specific Semi-formal Vocabulary	Improves fluency and comprehension of current medical issues
Hospital Documents	Institutional & Procedural Language	Strengthens formal documentation and clinical reporting competence

The results affirm findings in immersion and ESP research (Burger et al., 1997; Chen, 2012; Plesnevich, 1977) that genre-specific, contextualized instruction supports deeper vocabulary retention. This aligns with the notion that authentic input—language used in real-life professional contexts—creates meaningful associations that aid memory and application.

Furthermore, this study confirms and extends Israilova's prior research (2022c, 2023) on integrating multimedia and film-based tools for enhancing medical English. When combined with genre-based print texts, such approaches contribute to multimodal learning, reinforcing lexical patterns through varied sensory channels and tasks.

This genre-based model of vocabulary instruction supports the cognitive principle of "semantic scaffolding"—building meaning step-by-step through increasingly complex and authentic contexts. It also aligns with task-based language teaching, where vocabulary is acquired through use in meaningful communication.

Importantly, the study underscores the need to balance challenge with accessibility. Scientific articles, while cognitively demanding, offer irreplaceable academic vocabulary that is crucial for research literacy and postgraduate studies. Meanwhile, simpler texts like brochures and news articles are not only accessible entry points but also serve practical functions in patient interaction, education, and public health communication.

Taken together, these findings advocate for a structured, genre-diverse curriculum in medical ESP courses—one that mirrors the communicative demands students will face in academic, clinical, and public health environments.

Conclusion.

Professional medical texts are essential instruments in building medical students' lexical competence. Genre diversity not only enriches students' vocabulary but also prepares them for real-life communication in clinical, academic, and public health settings. An ESP curriculum that systematically incorporates scientific, clinical, and patient-oriented texts can produce students who are linguistically prepared for both academic excellence and professional interaction.

Moreover, the structured exposure to varied medical genres equips students with the ability to shift between formal, academic, and patient-centered registers, an essential skill in multilingual and multicultural medical environments. This adaptability fosters not only linguistic accuracy but also communicative confidence—enabling future healthcare professionals to effectively interact with peers, patients, and the broader medical community.

The findings underscore the importance of intentional, genre-based instruction in ESP programs. When carefully scaffolded, genre-specific texts provide a balanced pathway from comprehension to production, supporting long-term vocabulary retention, discourse fluency, and professional identity formation. Thus, professional medical texts should be regarded not merely as learning materials but as integral tools in shaping the communicative competence of the next generation of physicians.

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