

MASTERING THE INTERROGATIVES IN MEDICAL ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

Keywords: *medical terminology, interrogative sentences, professionally-oriented training, integrative approach.*

The rapidly increasing use of English as a *lingua franca* prompts to draw special attention to the English language training of undergraduates, researchers, and teaching staff at medical universities [1; 3]. In this context, one must bear in mind that conversational fluency largely relies on the ability to form correct interrogative sentences depending on the situation in the clinical or academic setting. Therefore, the present paper focuses on the methods of developing speaking and writing skills in forming different types of questions in the process of training undergraduates, Ph.D. students, academic and clinical teachers at a medical university. The results of the research have been integrated into the 1st edition of *Medical English for Academic Purposes* by Yu. Lysanets, O. Bieliaieva, M. Melaschenko (2018) [2], which focuses on improving the communication skills of medical professionals. We developed the linguo-didactic mechanisms for organizing the training material and delivering the course of Medical English for Professional Purposes. The proposed system of training tasks is intended to support courses in professional English at higher medical educational institutions in teaching and revising the grammar material on the types of questions: general (closed), special (open), alternative and disjunctive (tag). In this paper, we present several sample tasks from our methodological database.

First of all, students are suggested to revise the specified grammar material. In each case, interrogatives are illustrated by relevant examples from the areas of medicine and healthcare.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

There are four types of questions in English: **general (closed), special (open), alternative and disjunctive (tag).**

1) A closed question has only two possible answers – yes / no or a choice from two alternatives; also called a 50/50 question.

The verb “to be” (and less often, the verb “to have”):

The normal order of the subject and the verb is reversed:

- Are you ill? / Was anyone at home?
- Are you a doctor? Are there any other symptoms?
- Have you a book about osteopathy?
- Have we any more patients today?

Auxiliary verb (do / does / did, etc.):

The auxiliary or modal verb comes before the subject:

- Do we have any more patients today? Do you feel faint often?
- Does this hurt when I press here?
- Does pulpitis lead to abscess or cancer? Does this student attend lectures?
- Did he examine this patient yesterday? Did you pass urine/water today?

Auxiliary or modal verbs:

The subject and auxiliary verb are reversed.

- Have you been drinking alcohol?
- Can you stand on one leg?
- May I come in?

2) An open question requires a longer statement as an answer. Question words can be used: what? why? where? when? who? which? how? The normal order of the subject and the verb is reversed:

- Why are you ill?
- When should I telephone you?
- Where can you make the incision?
- Where did you first feel the pain?
- When did you notice this mark on your skin?
- Why are fractures in young people more likely to heal quickly?
- What treatment has the patient received?

NB! When a special question is put **to the subject or to an attribute of the subject**, the order of words is that of a statement, i.e. **no inversion is used** and **no auxiliary verb is needed**. The notional verb comes in the 3rd person singular.

- Who studies at the Academy?
- What causes caries?
- Who hasn't read this book yet?
- Who did this operation?
- What colour is the litmus paper?

3) An alternative question denotes choice. It consists of two general questions connected by means of “or”.

- Are you a first **or** a second year student?
- Does pulpitis lead to abscess **or** cancer?
- Did he participate in a conference **or** a workshop?
- Will you attend the lecture **or** practical session?

4) Question tags (disjunctive questions).

A question tag turns a statement into a question.

A positive statement followed by a negative question: (answer “yes”)

- He has already been seen by the consultant, hasn't he?
- He fainted when he saw the needle, didn't he?
- She is writing a report now, isn't she?
- These patients require constant monitoring, don't they?

- Hepatitis type is determined by laboratory tests, isn't it?
- This medication can cause side effects, can't it?

A negative statement followed by an affirmative question: (answer "no")

- He doesn't matter, does it?
- He won't survive this operation, will he?
- She isn't breathing properly, is he?

Next, students deal with a well-defined set of tasks, gradually covering receptive, reproductive and productive aspects of teaching. The suggested methodological algorithm is feasible for both oral and written communication, as well as for in-class or self-paced learning, depending on the features of the curriculum and students' English proficiency.

Sample tasks:

Ex. 1. The information below demonstrates the Eight-Item Morisky Medication Adherence Scale (MMAS-8), which was developed in 2008. Its purpose is to identify patients' medication-taking behaviours and adherence to treatment. Read the data from MMAS-8, identify types of questions and verb tenses.

MMAS-8

- 1) Do you sometimes forget to take your pills?
- 2) People sometimes miss taking their medications for reasons other than forgetting. Thinking over the past two weeks, were there any days when you did not take your medicine?
- 3) Have you ever cut back or stopped taking your medicine without telling your doctor because you felt worse when you took it?
- 4) When you travel or leave home, do you sometimes forget to bring along your medicine?
- 5) Did you take all your medicine yesterday?

6) When you feel like your symptoms are under control, do you sometimes stop taking your medicine?

7) Taking medicine every day is a real inconvenience for some people. Do you ever feel hassled about sticking to your treatment plan?

9) How often do you have difficulty remembering to take all your medicine?

___ A. Never/rarely

___ B. Once in a while

___ C. Sometimes

___ D. Usually

___ E. All the time

Ex. 2. Match doctor's questions (a-b) with patient's expected answers (1-12) and fill in the table:

QUESTIONS DOCTORS ASK PATIENTS:

a) What brings you in today?

b) Do you take any medicines or supplements?

c) Has the pain been getting better or worse?

d) Are you sexually active?

e) What hurts?

f) Are you allergic to any medicines?

g) Do you smoke? Do you take any recreational drugs? Do you drink alcohol and how often?

h) Does it hurt when I push here?

i) What are your symptoms?

j) Do you have a family history of this?

k) Have you had any previous surgeries?

l) How long has this been going on?

<i>Doctor's questions</i>	<i>Patient's expected answers</i>
_____?	No.1: Tell the doctor why you are there. Does something hurt? Have you been having some unusual symptoms? Are you pregnant? Did you fall? Is your arm broken?
_____?	No.2: Name the part(s) of the body that is hurting you and when they hurt.
_____?	No.3: More specifically, what is going on with your body? What do you feel? Common symptoms: dizziness, cough, stomach ache, diarrhoea, head ache, stomach ache, vertigo, constipation, sore throat, sleeplessness, feeling depressed, anxiety, etc.
_____?	No.4: How many days or months have your symptoms been going on? Give an estimate if you do not know exactly.
_____?	No.5: When do you feel the worst? Is it always the same time of day? Does it hurt all of the time? After you do a certain activity?
_____?	No.6: Truthfully answer the question. Your answer helps how the doctor makes his/her diagnosis. Also be sure to tell the doctor how often/how much.
_____?	No.7: The doctor wants to know if something runs in your family. Tell the doctor if your parents, siblings or grandparents had similar ailments. They often will ask you this about a list of diseases; like: cancer, diabetes, hypertension, depression, anxiety, heart problems, etc.
_____?	No.8: This helps the doctor know if the symptoms that you are feeling are side effects of the medicine or not. Supplements means: vitamins or herbs.

_____?	No.9: This helps the doctor know if they should consider pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases in their possible diagnosis.
_____?	No.10: Tell the doctor yes or no. If you have had surgeries tell the doctor what kind of surgery and how long ago you had it.
_____?	No.11: During a physical exam the doctor will touch or push on different parts of the body. Tell the doctor if that area hurts when touched or not.
_____?	No. 12: If the doctor prescribes you medicine they want to make sure you have not had a bad reaction to it in the past.

Ex. 3. Put all types of questions to the sentences:

1. Chronic hepatitis leads to liver scarring and cirrhosis.

- General question: _____
- Special question to the subject: _____
- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

2. People with hepatitis A are advised to rest, stay hydrated and avoid alcohol.

- General question: _____
- Special question to the subject: _____
- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

3. Infected people excrete HAV with their feces two weeks before and one week after the appearance of jaundice.

- General question: _____
- Special question to the subject: _____

- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

Ex. 4. Put all types of questions to the sentences with modal verbs:

1. TB can affect other areas of your body outside of the lungs, such as the kidney, spine, and brain.

- General question: _____
- Subject question to the subject: _____
- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

2. A person given the tuberculin skin test must return within 48 to 72 hours to have a trained health care worker look for a reaction on the arm.

- General question: _____
- Subject question to the subject: _____
- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

3. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

- General question: _____
- Subject question to the subject: _____
- Special question: _____
- Alternative question: _____
- Disjunctive question: _____

Ex. 5. Translate AND answer the questions:

1. Як шунтування відрізняється від стентування?

2. Які інструменти використовуються при стентуванні коронарних артерій?

3. Як пов'язані ангіопластика і стентування?

The didactic purposes of the tasks: a) practicing the use and formation of all types of questions; b) revising the use of present simple tense, active and passive voice, as well as modal verbs; c) developing the writing and translation skills; d) getting acquainted with relevant medical documents, such as MMAS-8; e) mastering new English medical terms and professional vocabulary to form questions and answers to them.

Thus, developing speaking and writing skills in forming different types of questions at a medical university is highly important for elimination of possible mistakes and misunderstanding in medical communication. The authors believe that this in turn will promote academic mobility and scientific cooperation, thus contributing to the development of higher medical education in Ukraine, which renders the research relevant.

References

1. Беляєва О.М. Функціонально-змістовні та функціонально-стильові характеристики наукових текстів / О.М. Беляєва // Інновації в освіті, науці та виробництві: матеріали шостої Всеукр. конф. – Полтава : ПІЕП, 2009. – С. 108–110.
2. Lysanets Yu. Medical English for Academic Purposes / Yu. Lysanets, O. Bieliaieva, M. Melaschenko. – Kyiv : AUS Medicine Publishing, 2018 – 312 p.

3. Robinson A. Implementation of the Integrative Approach to Teaching Medical English for Academic Purposes / A. Robinson, Yu. Lysanets, O Bieliaieva // Актуальні питання лінгвістики, професійної лінгводидактики, психології і педагогіки вищої школи: збірник статей III Міжнародної наук.-практ. конф. – Полтава : Астроя, 2018. – С. 273–281.

Анотація

У статті представлено методи формування навичок утворення та вживання питальних речень у процесі викладання курсу фахової англійської мови в закладах вищої освіти, які здійснюють підготовку фахівців галузі знань 22 «Охорона здоров'я». Авторами вироблена власна концепція викладу навчального матеріалу. Пропонований підхід апробовано при розробці підручника “Medical English for Academic Purposes” (2018). Розроблено лінгводидактичні механізми, спрямовані на розвиток, відпрацювання і систематизацію навичок вживання інтерогативних конструкцій в англійській мові.

Summary

The present paper focuses on the methods of developing the ability to form correct interrogative sentences depending on the situation in the clinical or academic setting in the process of training undergraduates, Ph.D. students, academic and clinical teachers at a medical university. The results of the research have been integrated into the 1st edition of Medical English for Academic Purposes by Yu. Lysanets, O. Bieliaieva, M. Melaschenko (2018). The authors developed the linguo-didactic mechanisms to support courses in professional English at higher medical educational institutions by teaching and revising the grammar material on interrogatives.