

Yu.V. Lysanets, O.M. Bieliaieva, O.O. Pisotska
Higher State Educational Establishment of Ukraine “Ukrainian Medical
Stomatological Academy”, Poltava

PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL DISCOURSE IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH: SPELLING DIFFERENCES

The paper focuses on the features of medical terminology through the prism of differences in spelling of British and American English. The present research is the first scientific effort to synthesize and summarize the potential difficulties that may arise when working with medical discourse genres of British and American English. The main differences in spelling of British and American English have been outlined. The authors developed methodical recommendations for minimizing and avoiding errors in the English language writing by Ukrainian scholars. The authors emphasize the importance of following the consistency principle when writing for British or American audience. It is necessary to pay special attention to spelling features of British and American medical English when developing academic ESP syllabi at medical universities. The study of potential difficulties, which Ukrainian medical professionals may encounter in the process of producing medical discourse in British and American English, is important for developing relevant guidelines to eliminate possible mistakes and avoid misunderstanding in medical communication. It is crucial for medical professionals to be aware of peculiarities of British and American medical English in order to be understood and accepted in the modern English-speaking world. The analysis of potential challenges in producing medical discourse in British and American English is an important element for integration of Ukrainian researchers into the world community. The research will be useful for translation studies, teaching English as a second language, and developing multilingual competence of future doctors.

Key words: *medical terminology, medical discourse, speech errors.*

Лисанець Ю.В., Беляєва О.М., О.О. Пісоцька

Вищий державний навчальний заклад України «Українська медична
стоматологічна академія», м. Полтава

**ПРОФЕСІЙНИЙ МЕДИЧНИЙ ДИСКУРС У БРИТАНСЬКОМУ І
АМЕРИКАНСЬКОМУ ВАРІАНТАХ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ:
ВІДМІННОСТІ У ПРАВОПИСІ**

У статті проаналізовано особливості медичної термінології крізь призму відмінностей у правописі британської і американської англійської мови. Пропонована розвідка є першою науковою спробою синтезувати й узагальнити потенційні труднощі, які можуть виникнути при роботі з жанрами медичного дискурсу британського і американського варіантів англійської мови. Розроблено методичні рекомендації щодо мінімізації й уникнення помилок в англомовному писемному мовленні українських науковців.

Ключові слова: *медична термінологія, медичний дискурс, мовні помилки.*

Лисанец Ю.В., Беляева Е.Н., Е.А. Песоцкая

Высшее государственное учебное заведение Украины «Украинская
медицинская стоматологическая академия», г. Полтава

**ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫЙ МЕДИЦИНСКИЙ ДИСКУРС В БРИТАНСКОМ
И АМЕРИКАНСКОМ ВАРИАНТАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА:
ОТЛИЧИЯ В ПРАВОПИСАНИИ**

В статье проанализированы особенности медицинской терминологии сквозь призму различий в правописании британского и американского английского языка. Данное исследование является первой научной попыткой синтезировать и обобщить потенциальные трудности, которые могут возникнуть при работе с жанрами медицинского дискурса британского и

американского вариантов английского языка. Разработаны методические рекомендации с целью минимизации и избежания ошибок в англоязычной письменной речи украинских ученых.

Ключевые слова: медицинская терминология, медицинский дискурс, речевые ошибки.

The prevalence of English as not only the *lingua franca*, but as an important transmission medium of scientific knowledge in our time compels the professionals in all spheres of science and technology to render their research results in English in order to be understood and acknowledged. Internationalization of higher education raises a demand for effective training of students who will ultimately succeed in the wider English-speaking world [10]. However, conversational fluency does not guarantee the effective mastering of academic writing skills: it is necessary to acquire the so-called “*academic literacy*” in English as a global language in science and technology [9]. In order to achieve this objective, medical professionals are expected to be not only fluent in English, but also well-versed in academic style and standards. The major challenges in academic English vocabulary and grammar have already been discussed in our previous studies [1; 2; 3; 4]. We also focused upon potential errors in academic English spelling and punctuation [5; 6; 7; 8]. The present paper directs attention to the features of medical terminology through the prism of differences in spelling standards of British and American English.

The aim of the study is to outline major differences in spelling of British and American English and to develop methodical recommendations for minimizing and avoiding errors in the English language writing by Ukrainian scholars. The present study is the first scientific effort to synthesize and summarize the potential difficulties that may arise when working with medical discourse genres of British and American English, which renders the research relevant.

There are several areas in which British and American spelling are different [9]. British English tends to retain the spelling of words which it has absorbed from other languages (e.g., Latin), while American English has adapted the spelling to reflect the way that the words actually sound [9]. Tables 1, 2 represent the most widespread medical terms with Latin diphthongs “ae” and “oe” which are preserved in British English and reduced to “e” in the US.

Table 1

Spelling differences in British and US English: vowels “ae” and “e”

<u>Br</u>	<u>US</u>
<u>a</u>etiology	<u>e</u>tiology
ana <u>a</u> emia	ana <u>e</u> emia
ana <u>a</u> esthetic	ana <u>e</u> sthetic
ca <u>a</u> esarean	ce <u>e</u> sarean
defa <u>a</u> ecation	defe <u>e</u> cation
dyslipida <u>a</u> emia	dyslipide <u>e</u> mia
glyca <u>a</u> emic	glyce <u>e</u> mic
gyna <u>a</u> ecology	gyn <u>e</u> cology
ha <u>a</u> emoglobin	he <u>e</u> moglobin
ha <u>a</u> emorrhage	he <u>e</u> morrhage
ischa <u>a</u> emic	ische <u>e</u> mic
leuka <u>a</u> emia	leuke <u>e</u> mia
orthopa <u>a</u> edic	orthope <u>e</u> dic
pa <u>a</u> ediatric	pe <u>e</u> diatric

Table 2

Spelling differences in British and US English: vowels “oe” and “e”

<u>Br</u>	<u>US</u>
diarrho <u>o</u> ea	diarrhe <u>e</u> a
co <u>o</u> eliac	ce <u>e</u> liac
dyspno <u>o</u> ea	dyspne <u>e</u> a
fo <u>o</u> etus	fe <u>e</u> tus
man <u>o</u> oeuvre	mane <u>e</u> uver
<u>o</u> edema	<u>e</u> dema
<u>o</u> esophagus	<u>e</u> sophagus
<u>o</u> estrogen	<u>e</u> strogen

Another common challenge for non-native speakers of English consists in the choice of endings in certain terms, depending on the British/American context. Table 3 provides a list of words with endings “-re” (Br) / “-er” (US) and “-our” (Br) / “-or” (US).

Table 3

**Spelling differences in British and US English:
endings “-re” and “-er”; “-our” and “-or”**

Br	US	Br	US
centimet <u>re</u>	centimeter <u>er</u>	behavi <u>our</u>	behavior <u>or</u>
centr <u>re</u>	center <u>er</u>	col <u>our</u>	color <u>or</u>
fib <u>re</u>	fiber <u>er</u>	hum <u>our</u>	humor <u>or</u>
lit <u>re</u>	liter <u>er</u>	lab <u>our</u>	labor <u>or</u>
tit <u>re</u>	titer <u>er</u>	tum <u>our</u>	tumor <u>or</u>

Yet another spelling difficulty may be encountered with endings “-ise” / “-ize” and “-yse” / “-yze” (Table 4).

Table 4

**Spelling differences in British and US English:
endings “-ise” and “-ize”; “-yse” and “-yze”**

Br	US
organis <u>ise</u>	organiz <u>ize</u>
realis <u>ise</u>	realiz <u>ize</u>
recognis <u>ise</u>	recogniz <u>ize</u>
Br	US
analys <u>ise</u>	analyz <u>ize</u>
catalys <u>ise</u>	catalyz <u>ize</u>
paralys <u>ise</u>	paralyz <u>ize</u>

Most peer-reviewed academic journals have particular requirements regarding the British or American spelling. Therefore, it is crucial for medical professionals to follow the consistency principle, i.e., always to spell as the journal prefers – US or

UK, – and never a mixture of styles [9]. Consistent spelling within the same piece of writing when writing for British or American audience is an essential prerequisite for scholars.

By contrast, mixing British and American English in formal writing provides an impression of author's inconsistency and illiteracy. Consequently, it can influence the reviewer's or editor's decision, and eventually result in paper's rejection. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to spelling features of British and American medical English when developing academic ESP syllabi at medical universities.

The provided lists of lexical units are by no means exhaustive: they aim to structure the material under consideration and stipulate further development. The aforementioned material has already been integrated into the 1st edition of *Medical English for Academic and Teaching Purposes* (by Yu. Lysanets, O. Bieliaieva, M. Melaschenko: in press), which largely focuses on improving the writing skills in British and American English.

We also suggest grouping the miscellaneous lexis of medicine and healthcare in British and American English as displayed in Table 5. The proposed system of organizing the material aims to facilitate memorizing of such terms and avoiding errors in their use.

Table 5

Spelling differences in British and US English: miscellanea

Br	US
age <u>i</u> ng	ag <u>i</u> ng
alumin <u>i</u> um	alumin <u>u</u> m
counsell <u>l</u> or	counsel <u>l</u> or
defence <u>e</u>	defense <u>e</u>
depend <u>a</u> nt (noun), depend <u>e</u> nt (adjective)	depend <u>e</u> nt
equal <u>l</u> ed	equal <u>e</u> d
fulfil <u>l</u>	fulfill <u>l</u>
grey <u>y</u>	gray <u>y</u>
intervertebral disc <u>c</u>	intervertebral disk <u>k</u>
label <u>l</u> ed	label <u>e</u> d
leuc <u>c</u> ocyte	leuk <u>k</u> ocyte

to license (verb), licence (noun)	license (verb and noun)
modell <u>e</u> d	model <u>e</u> d
operating theatre	operating room
to practi <u>s</u> e (verb), practi <u>c</u> e (noun)	practi <u>c</u> e (verb and noun)
programm <u>e</u>	program
signall <u>e</u> d	signal <u>e</u> d
sulph <u>u</u> r	sulfur

Thus, the study of potential difficulties, which Ukrainian medical professionals may face in the process of producing medical discourse in British and American English, is important for developing the guidelines to eliminate possible mistakes and avoid misunderstanding in medical communication. It is crucial for medical professionals to be aware of differences in spelling of British and American English so that they are able to produce effective genres of medical discourse, which will be accepted by peer-reviewed journals. The analysis of potential challenges in producing medical discourse in British and American English is an important element for integration of Ukrainian researchers into the world community.

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., 23–24 квіт. 2009 р. / Полтавськ. ін-т економіки і права вищ. навч. закл. “Відкритий ун-т розвитку людини “Україна”. – Полтава : ПІЕП, 2009. – С. 108–110.
2. Лисанець Ю. Типологія мовних помилок у процесі вивчення англійської мови студентами вищих медичних навчальних закладів / Ю. Лисанець, Стриж А. // Нові технології навчання: наук.-метод. зб. – К., 2016. – Вип. 86 (Ч.1). – С. 26–28.
3. Bieliaieva O. M. Grammatical and lexical features of academic writing in English for medical students / O. M. Bieliaieva, Yu. V. Lysanets // Сучасні проблеми гуманітаристики: світоглядні пошуки, комунікативні та педагогічні стратегії:

матеріали V Всеукр. наук.-практ. конф. (Рівне, 10 грудня 2015 р.). – Рівне, 2015. – С. 233–235.

4. Bieliaieva O.M. Terminological collocations in medical Latin and English: A comparative study / O.M. Bieliaieva, Yu.V. Lysanets, I.V. Znamenska, I.V. Rozhenko, N.M. Nikolaieva // *Wiadomości Lekarskie*. – 2017. – 70(1). – P. 139–143.
5. Bieliaieva O. Latin as a language of international communicative status: Medicine of the 16th-17th centuries / O. Bieliaieva, Yu. Lysanets, M. Melaschenko // *Georgian Medical News*. – 2017. – 262. – P. 120–124.
6. Bieliaieva O. Paronymy in the sublanguage of medicine (linguistic and linguo-didactic aspects) / O. Bieliaieva, Yu. Lysanets, K. Havrylieva, I. Znamenska, I. Rozhenko, N. Nikolaieva // *Georgian Medical News*. – 2017. – 271. – P. 144–149.
7. Lysanets Yu. Stylistic features of case reports as a genre of medical discourse [Електронний ресурс] / Yu. Lysanets, H. Morokhovets, O. Bieliaieva // *Journal of Medical Case Reports*. – 2017. – 11(83). – Режим доступу до журн.: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13256-017-1247-x>
8. Lysanets Yu. The use of Latin terminology in medical case reports: Quantitative, structural, and thematic analysis [Електронний ресурс] / Yu. Lysanets, O. Bieliaieva // *Journal of Medical Case Reports*. – 2018. – 12(45) – Режим доступу до журн.: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13256-018-1562-x>
9. Lysanets Yu. Lexical and grammar features of academic writing in medical English: Lecture Materials for PhD Students / Yu. Lysanets. – Poltava : “Ukrainian Medical Stomatological Academy”, 2017. – 56 p.
10. Morokhovets H.Yu. Developing the professional competence of future doctors in the instructional setting of higher medical educational institutions / H.Yu. Morokhovets, Yu.V. Lysanets // *Wiadomości Lekarskie*. – 2017. – 70(1). – P. 101–104.