

Mariusz Górnicz

Report of the Conference "The Language of Medicine - from its Genesis to the Culture and Ethics of Communication", 14th Days of Bioethics, Rijeka, Croatia, 10-11 May 2012

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Report of the Conference *The Language of Medicine – from its Genesis to the Culture and Ethics of Communication*, 14th Days of Bioethics, Rijeka, Croatia, 10-11 May 2012

The international scientific conference on “The Language of Medicine – from its Genesis to the Culture and Ethics of Communication” was part of the 14th Days of Bioethics celebrated at the Medical Faculty of the University of Rijeka on May 10 and 11, 2012. It brought together teachers of medical English and researchers who investigate the technolect of medicine as well as those concerned with communication in medicine and health care and the theory and practice of bioethics.

It was the latter theme, however, that actually set the tenor of the entire event as the conference was a way to commemorate the life and work of Fritz Jahr, called “the father of modern bioethics”, whose thought is studied and promoted by the Medical Faculty in Rijeka. The proceedings of the conference will be peer-reviewed and published in 2013 as the second issue of the journal “Jahr – Annual of Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities at University of Rijeka Faculty of Medicine”, established in honour of F. Jahr.

The conference’s programme was intensive, with keynote plenary lectures in the morning followed by three parallel thematic sessions on each day. The keynote speakers presented a diachronic analysis of title and authorship patterns in medical case reports, a report of common linguistic errors in titles of master’s theses and doctoral dissertations in the medical sciences in Croatian, a heart-warming presentation showing how communication is the master key to the patient’s heart and a prognostic view of the languages of medicine at present and in the future.

The thematic sessions were concerned with bioethics; medical terminology; teaching medical English; communication in medicine and health care; medical discourse; translation, history and literature; and sign language and deaf patients. Some well-known names among the speakers included Françoise Salager-Meyer, whose team presented one of the plenary lectures, and Božena Džuganová.

The topics of individual presentations reflected a wide diversity of approaches to the language of medicine. Those concerned with teaching medical English often focused on individual teaching experiences with particular student groups (such as engineering students learning ergonomics) or with aspects of overall organisation and management of schooling in the medical LSP. Presentations

exploring various communicative situations, especially involving specific patient groups (dental, terminally ill, Alzheimer's), could be found both under the label of "Communication in medicine and health care" and under "Medical discourse". The latter also featured more theoretical undertakings, including a discussion of argument structures in descriptive medical texts and a rhetorical analysis of advertising in the specific setting of biomedical journals. The session on bioethics, too, included presentations of linguistic nature, such as the terminology of disability.

As the above overview shows, there was something of interest to "medical linguists" of every ilk, from terminologists to foreign language teachers to discourse analysts and, finally, to clinical linguists, bioethicians and those communicating directly with patients, making future "Days of Bioethics" conferences a worthwhile event to attend.

The working languages were Croatian and English, but presentations delivered during thematic sessions were not ordered according to the language used, which led to some participants changing rooms rather hastily to be able to listen to another presentation in a language they could understand.

On a lighter note, the thematic sessions were held on the third floor of the Medical Faculty building and those who had climbed the three flights of stairs were greeted by an informative poster discussing the medical significance of shortness of breath. Aptly placed!

Mariusz GÓRNICZ
Uniwersytet Warszawski