Stylistic Issues of Modern Dental Scientific Discourse

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Abstract

The article provides an attempt to reveal and analyze main stylistic issues of scientific dental discourse. As a result of reviewing theoretical and methodological basics of standardizing the language of science and studying discourse fragments, the current state of observing usual word use norms in the course of writing dental scientific discourse texts in different genres: original abstracts, articles, manuals, textbooks, monographs, etc. has been investigated. In addition, the article characterizes cases of incorrect and irrelevant use of language units in professional texts in the dental field and justifies the analysis of dental scientific language correspondence to the basic communicative features of the language. The importance of correct interpretation of scientific facts, modern theories and hypotheses is pointed out. It is also noted that the skillful usage of professional terms is a daily duty of every qualified specialist. The general scientific (induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, observation, comparison, generalization) and linguistic methods and techniques were used in this scientific work. There was also indicated on irregularity of the professional language of the dental industry. In the article, there were provided arguments and reasonableness for preferred usage of the Ukrainian terms. There was also given a number of national equivalents to the foreign words from the sphere of dentistry.

Keywords: Use about five key words or phrases in alphabetical order, Separated by Semicolon.

1. Introduction

The problems of stylistic perfection and communicative potential of scientific discourse have been under consideration of scientists in different fields of knowledge for a long time. Acute problems of practice of scientific texts creation and perception in contemporary linguistics were investigated by M. Hinzburh [2]; N. Zelinska [3]; A. Koval [4]; M. Kochan [5]; O. Lavrinets [7]; L. Matsko [12]; N. Nepiyoda [14], [15]; T. Radzievska [18]; O. Selihei [21], [22], [23]; O. Semenoh [24]; T. Ternavska [25] and others. Not only factual accuracy and scrupulousness of a scientist testify to his high professionalism and professional competence. We are convinced that the level of mastery of language skills greatly influences the adequacy of the perception of information in general and the popularization of their scientific ideas, interpretations and theories. It is known for certain that the latest scientific paradigm promotes notional transformation and systematic evolution of scientific work form. Established stylistic traditions supplement views justified by researchers concerning the importance of standardized and, of course, stylistically correct verbal implementation of the facts, known by scientists. We mean the drastic change of views on the priority of the scientific text content over its language form. In spite of realizing the statement verity about the importance of ideas and conclusions, which scientist seek to offer to the wide range of readers, reflections on the attention to the presentation of scientific language and professional information is beyond doubt. «A perfect scientific text is meant not only to pass specific information, but also to present it as simply and quickly as possible. Such texts firmly keep the attention of the readers, have intellectual influence, and, as a result, enrich their minds, change their convictions and opinions» – rightly points out P. Selihei, a known researcher of scientific jargon [23, p. 11].

There is no point in arguing with this, it is better to follow the advice and present scientific research results taking into account the requirements for the content and form. Disregarding established norms when creating scientific texts leads to stylistic errors and produces «negative language material», that is «a statement, hardly understood; which requires time or significant effort to understand» [28, c. 28]. It is necessary to consider the criteria of communicative adequacy and stylistic efficiency of scientific texts not only for linguists, but also for both young and experienced scientists in different fields of knowledge. We cannot omit the medical sphere, while continuous, sometimes abrupt development within this field leads to appearance of new samples of scientific text. Unfortunately, both articles and large-scale and informative scientific papers, such as theses, study guides, textbooks, or monographs, devoted to urgent medical issues, contain stylistic contradictions and flaws related to their language presentation.

We should also emphasize that there has not been much systematic work which would promote regulation and standardization of scientific presentation of specialized medical information (T. Leshchenko [8], [9], [10]; N. Lytvynenko [11]; N. Misnyk [13]; L. Ridneva [19]; L. Pyrih [17]; O. Samoilsyova [20]; A. Tkach [26]; O. Shanina [27] and others). Those points indicate the relevance and urgency of the research. Medicine is the branch of Ukrainian science, which is rapidly and continuously developing. Without any doubt it combines the most ancient valuable achievements of the past and the vital, vital
achievements of today’s highly skilled specialists. This structured, time-tested system of scientific knowledge and practical actions should use properly organized and orderly professional language. For the full value of written scientific broadcasting in this area, it is important to adhere to the norms of use of lexical, grammatical and stylistic resources of the modern Ukrainian language. Instead, we have the fragility of this term fund, which, in our opinion, is due to the structural complexity, heterogeneity and multi-componentness of the conceptual system of dentistry in general, the constant active development of the health care sector against other socially important changes, scientific and technological progress, inventions and discoveries, as well as variety of means and sources of replenishment of its vocabulary, phenomena of polysemny, synonymy, variability, etc.

The practical significance of the article is beyond doubt, because the findings of the study, the results of the analysis will help not only to perceive the dental practitioners the negative effects of the terminological imbalance in the professional language of dentistry, serve in the course of their professional duties, but will undoubtedly contribute to the standardization of the specified terminology in general, will help to improve the scientific texts on actual dental problems. On the one hand, dentists will be able to protect themselves from the use of non-normative elements in oral, and primarily in the written scientific broadcast, and on the other – to master the correct versions of professional scientific vocabulary.

2. Problem research

The aim of the research is to reveal and analyze major stylistic issues in scientific dental discourse. In order to achieve the aim, performing the following tasks is necessary: 1) to describe theoretical-methodological basics of scientific language standardization; 2) to put emphasis on the norms of language use in science; 3) to outline and characterize cases of incorrect and irrelevant use of language units in professional language in the field of dentistry. The specialized language of dentistry is not distinguished from the general unified scientific range and responds extremely quickly to any extra-curricular changes, demonstrating the ability to adapt to the changing needs of our time. The rapid scientific and technical, continuous information development, the continuous introduction of the latest technologies into the dental industry, the spontaneous internationalization of communication in the medical environment, on the one hand, complicate the process of streamlining the system of new terms, and on the other - prompts linguists to thorough study, standardization and further codification already formed terminology. In addition, the problem of the formation and improvement of researchers by their individual scientific style is extremely acute. Looking for reasons of appearance, features of diagnosis, effective algorithms of treatment and prevention of a certain illness, dentists usually forget about the need to translate their ideas into adequate linguistic forms. Failure to adhere to basic lexical, morphological, syntactic, phraseological or stylistic norms of literary language leads to a low level of linguistic culture of scientific works in general and accelerates the spontaneous process of establishing the science-like nature of dental studios.

This article focuses attention on the language of dental sphere, which is developing continuously and actively, responding to the rapid development and implementation of the latest technologies and advances of the modern medicine. Clearly, for improving professional competence and sometimes for general intellectual development, dentists (both practicing and theoreticians) study examples of scientific dental discourse in a variety of genres. However, quite often they come across scientific papers the communicative potential of which can hardly be evaluated positively.

T. Leshenko in her article devoted to the investigation of this topic states: «Our many years’ experience of editorial work on scientific papers proves that authors-researchers often lack accurate, striking words for characterizing the main parts of a research paper; the language used in many scientific papers is monotonous, primitive, poor» [10, p. 140]. In such texts, presented in a distorted linguistic form and stylistically imperfect, we can notice a number of errors, which decrease their scientific power and prove that there is a thin line between stylistically perfect and imperfect dental scientific texts.

It is extremely difficult for dentists to present information appropriately, even when they have a powerful theoretical and methodological scientific base, solid facts and many years of practical and research work. Because of this erratic process, it is not easy to select among the samples of scientific dental discourse such papers, where scientific ideas are implemented in a precise, clear and correct way. Instead, a prevailing number of papers deserve linguistic criticism. Clearly, the stage of standardizing the language of science, and therefore writing correct, effective, structurally perfect, informatively complete and balanced in content and form professional scientific texts is preceded by an extremely difficult period for the researchers, when they use language units, which are unreasonable and fail to meet the usual norms. In order to correct stylistic errors, it is necessary to provide the opportunity for the author-scientist to understand clearly and precisely the standards of language use in science in general, and for dentists primarily within the framework of dentistry and medicine. Only knowledge of what should be avoided will promote the emergence of high-quality research.

The analysis of multi-genre texts in scientific dental discourse – original abstracts, articles, manuals, textbooks, monographs, etc. – revealed a number of stylistic errors that violate the unity of a scientific paper and complicate the process of comprehension. Thus, a widespread stylistic mistake according to P. Selihej [23] is the use of too many verbal and adjectival nouns ending with -піть/ -піть in scientific papers, in particular those devoted to current dental issues. It is quite possible, that excessive use of lexemes with abstract meaning is caused by the researchers’ pursuit of making texts more scientific, precise, academic, sometimes no informative and representing facts in a form, which makes them difficult to comprehend. Such a wrong view only makes it harder for the recipient to understand what the author of the research paper meant.

From our point of view, excessive use of nouns should not be interpreted as a stylistic advancement, as a sign of raising scientific language expressiveness or means of leveling the author’s assessment of the statements manifestations. It is also not a sign of sophistication or perfection of scientific texts. However, it is still common to use a large number of subordinate nouns in one sentence. We can find a lot of examples of nouns excessive use described above in the analyzed samples of dental scientific discourse: «У таїкій ситуації проводять діагностичне уточнення швидкості накопичення» [Могоз, р. 31]. «Аналіз інтенсивності карієсу тимчасових зубів залежно від віку виявив зростання показника їх від 3-х до 6-ти років (в середньому з 4,16±0,37 зуба до 7,92±0,34 зуба; р<0,001)» (Bondarchuk).

Such a violation of stylistic harmony can be eliminated. According to M. Ginzburg, for this purpose «it is necessary to replace verbal noun phrases with verbs and make sentences with infinitive verb forms, sentences with finite verb forms, adverbial participles, verb forms ending with -но, -мо» [2, p. 26]. It is also necessary to mention features of scientific vocabulary use. In the analyzed fragments of dental scientific discourse terminological units (words and phrases) used for referring to notions, clearly defined within a certain field of knowledge, represent more than a fair share of the text. Sometimes there are too many difficult for understanding words referring to basic professional notions, terms borrowed from other sciences without a reasonable basis and international terminological units: «Каріозогність цукрів обумовлена їх здатністю дифундувати вліб бляшки» (Daniilevskiy).
We particularly emphasize the use of terminological units formed with the native language material, that is, synonyms to the usual terms-nominations of foreign origin. As research shows, they can be combined in pairs (nationally identical terms and their foreign language synonyms): маргинальный – крайний; медиальный – серединный; интактный – здоровый; анапличный – верховодчатый; перипатетический – наволоковерховодчатый; витаминический – внутритканевый; пародонтальный – зубовенной; мутуальный – взаимный; обобщённый; токсизму; поляренность; вариабельность – резноимённость; биоразнообразие – разнообразие; прогнозирование – предсказуемость; регенерация – возвращение; диарея – диагностика etc.

The analysis shows that researchers, deliberately or subconsciously, do not prefer the nominations formed by means of specific Ukrainian language material; they rather choose foreign terminologies: «Гострий гнійний періодонтит розвивається, якщо інфекція, що потрапила в періодонт, має високу отруйність; варіабельність мутуального взаємодії» (Danylevskiy), "Залежно від етапу розвитку організму людини збігається відповідно до групи 92,16 і 91,38 % пацієнтів», "Стан ендодонтично лікотривання згідно з критеріями обстеження представлений у табл. 5" (Borisenko).

It is also worth paying attention to the balance of active and passive syntactic constructions comprising the text. O. Lavriets is convinced that «Among passive forms, sentences with predicate forms ending with –но / -to should have the dominant position as a specific feature of the Ukrainian syntax with a long history of use» [7, p. 74]. It is difficult to disagree with this idea, because a common feature of Ukrainian, unlike Russian and English languages, is the widespread use of active verbs, and observations show that authors of scientific papers, including those concerning dental issues, actively use verbal forms ending with –но / -to: «Безкількісна пластика використовується для визначення багатих зубних протезів у випадках, коли не дозволено поліфарбовані базиси протезів, окрім високих алергічних реакцій від низької концентрації ртутного сплаву».

However, scientific dental texts also have significant stylistic flaws. Thus, we notice the use of unmotivated and tabooed by the rules of the Ukrainian language using expressions with passive adverbs and verbs but: буде: «Інукваріанта» було продемонстровано у культурі тканин при культивуванні макрофагів і часточок металу» (Potapchuk), "Який метод лікування було застосовано?" (Potapchuk), "Для систематизації топів архітектонічні було запропоновано кілька класифікацій" (Nidzelskyi), "ЗАХВОРЮВАННЯ ОСНОВНЕ – тарілка, що сам по собі або за допомогою своєї служби виконує за медичної допомоги і на лікування якого було спрямовано основну уяву лікарів».
Among the most common pairs there are the following: використовують – використоються, вивчають – вивчаються, ілюструють – ілюструються, досліджують – досліджуються, аналізують – аналізуються, об’єднуються – об’єднуються, здійснюють – здійснюються, класифікують – класифікуються, підкреслюють – підкреслюються, надають – надаються, визнають – визнаються, доводять – доводяться, опиши – описуються, фіксують – фікуються etc. У дентальній імплантації найбільш часто використовують кістку із підобіркового виділу або рентгенівського зразка низької щелепи (Nidzelskyi), «У дентальній імплантації кісткова аутотрансплантата» використоються у різних варіантах антрофії щелепи (Nidzelsk) [748].

The samples of dental discourse are rich in passive constructions with verbs ending with -ся and inanimate nouns in the instrumental case. This is a violation of the language norm: «Зубний натій (будь-яка кількість м’якого білого нальоту, яка виникає зондом на поверхні коронки зуба, в міжзубних проміжках чи приясній зоні)» (Potapchuk). «Кінчічий приховано запалюється металоплазією елементів крові з ретикулярних клітин органів, не пов’язаних з нормальних умовах із кровотворенням, у тому числі з тканини порожнина рота (пульпа, періодонт, ясна)» (Rotapchuk). «Процеси стабілізації та ремісії оцінюються позитивними, якщо кінчічний стан підтверджується лабораторними, функціональними, рентгенологічними методи та об’єкти» (Potapchuk). «Захворювання викликане видом Актинобацилус Актиноміцетемкомпанте (Potapchuk).»

In order to avoid such stylistic collisions it is necessary to opt for active constructions consisting of two parts, for example: «Зубний натій (будь-яка кількість м’якого білого нальоту, яка виникає з допомогою зондом на поверхні коронки зуба, в міжзубних проміжках чи приясній зоні)», «Кінчічний приховано запалюється металоплазією елементів крові з ретикулярних клітин органів, не пов’язаних з нормальних умовах із кровотворенням, у тому числі з тканини порожнина рота (пульпа, періодонт, ясна)» (Skripnikov etc).

Paying no attention to advice for improving the style of scientific discourse can possibly lead to appearance of puns, comic effects, conceptual mistakes: «Пухлина щітків, яка запалюється видом Актинобацилус Актиноміцетемкомпанте (Nidzelskiy), і стабілізується, якщо кінчічний стан підтверджується лабораторними, функціональними, рентгенологічними методи та об’єкти» (Potapchuk). «Процеси стабілізації та ремісії оцінюються позитивними, якщо кінчічний стан підтверджується лабораторними, функціональними, рентгенологічними методи та об’єкти» (Potapchuk). «Захворювання викликане видом Актинобацилус Актиноміцетемкомпанте (Potapchuk).»

The first step on the way to overcoming linguistic inferiority is to master the norms of the Ukrainian language. However, once again we emphasize the lack of linguistic culture of scientific works of dentists. Unfortunately, the multi-genre forms of the scientific text - reports, lectures, articles, monographs, manuals, reference books, etc., whose authors are often recognized and appreciated by the scientific circles of experts in one direction in the field of dentistry, can not be considered models of normality, stylistic perfection, and terminological certainty. Of course, no system achieves perfection right away, but one must strive for it. The first is to learn how to choose from among a wide range of expressive means those that not only make public the scientific achievements of the researcher, but also provide the logic, accuracy and correctness of the statement of the facts. Of course, this process is significantly complicated by extra-curricular reality.

We consider the language of science, its potential, peculiarities of development, quality and normalization as interesting and extremely urgent issues of modern humanitarianism. Extralinguistic reality always provides a motive and material for scientific and educational activity, the contents and results of which must be expressed in accordance with lexical, morphological, syntactic, phraseological and stylistic norms of the standard language, established in scientific practice and time proved. On the other hand, scientific activity stimulates the expressiveness of the language. In this context, multi-disciplinary scientific texts require special attention. The study of multi-genre samples of the dental discourse revealed their communicative inadequacy and stylistic imperfections.

The views presented in this article are merely an attempt to distinguish, describe, and partially systematize the main stylistic issues of scientific dental discourse (excessive use of nouns and terminological units, the prevalence of foreign language origin terminology, pleonasm, word repetition, use of linguistic clichés, use of unnecessary words, misbalance between active and passive structures, long sentences, etc.).

The study of the textual material made it possible to show the difficulties of translation from Russian and to determine the usage of incorrect language equivalents of dental terms.

We consider the perspective for further research in studying stylistic issues in scientific discourse, dental in particular. Interesting and valuable, in our opinion, is the study of dental scientific texts correspondence to the basic communicative features of the language.

Further detailed analysis of the specifics of the functioning of the national and borrowed in the scientific dental discourse is an actual problem. In addition, we consider the necessity to formulate practical recommendations and advice to all authors of scientific medical (dental) texts original abstracts, articles, manuals, textbooks, monographs, etc. regarding the need and significance of serving nationally identical terms in exchange for their alien synonyms.

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