

## **Stylistic Features of Scientific English: A Study of Scientific**

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine what features of style characterize scientific English and what make this language different from the language of any other discipline, what certain areas of language are used in science texts.

This paper deals with the linguistic features concerning the application of grammar, vocabulary, discourse and style used in scientific English.

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION**

Features commented before -> Scientific Discourse characteristics

Evolved -> not arbitrary.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A contrastive study of two corpora:  
scientific and poetic language.

Abstract

Introduction

Methodology

Result and Discussion

Conclusion and Implication

Introduction

Literary texts and Scientific texts are strikingly different because they use English language in a quite different form.

## **Stylistic Features of Scientific English: A Study of Scientific Research Articles**

Scientific language vs.

Literary Language

Accurate Metaphoric

Precise Ambiguous

Objective Subjective

Impersonal Personal

Present study

Examples from scientific research to consolidate the notions about linguistic features.

Ex. the frequency of occurrence of Passive voice in Method Section.

Grammatical components

Sentences, vocabulary, discourse features

**Jameel Ahmad. Jeddah Community College, KAU, Saudi Arabia. Published: March 1, 2012.**

Literary English is subjective interpretation of life whereas scientific English is marked with

accuracy precision and objective interpretation of facts and findings. Literary language represents the artist's inner self and his feeling whereas scientific language represents universal truth.

Scientists use Passive Voice in order to get rid of personal whims and fancies. Many other features such as Nominalization and 'interrogative gambit' in scientific research journals have also been

taken into account in this study. These methods of scientific research articles make scientific research findings impersonal and universal.

Stevens

(1977) Greek and Latin expressions International in character.

Widdowson

(1974) depersonalization as means of producing non ordinary expressions.

Hilary Glasman

(2009) different uses of the tenses depending on the section of the article: Introduction -----

Present Simple

Method Section ----- Simple Past Passive Result Section ----- Simple Past

Pauline

(1994) Interrogative Gambit.

Meyer

(2011) Hedging

Literature Review

10 scientific research articles have been analyzed

E.g. "The Lancet, BMJ and Down to Earth.

Poems drawn from Milton, Spenser, John Keats... have been verified by contrastive analysis: to make the linguistic features of scientific text clearer and understandable.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ARTICLES**

IMRD sections

**I**

Introduction:

What are we researching?

**M**

Method: How we study it?

**R**

Result: What was what we found?

**D**

Discussion: What is the meaning of the result?

### **STYLISTIC FEATURES OF SCIENTIFIC TEXT**

Non-figurative language

Scientific text doesn't bother in rhyme, connotative or symbolic meaning

E.g. allegory in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*

Scientists don't want to create additional impressionistic or aesthetic effects, beyond that of the dissemination of experimental information.

Away, Away! For I will fly to thee

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of poesy.

(John Keats)

## Non-Deviation from Linguistic Norms

Grammatical and syntactic deviation: ERRORS in scientific language

Leech (1965) has called them "foregrounding"

1. Slept Rip Winkle twenty years.
2. The door is strange to be unlocked.
3. when will your round me going end?

1. Rip Van Winkle slept for twenty years.
2. It is strange that the door is unlocked.
3. When will you end your going round me?

Communicate well the findings worldwide is the prime objective of the scientists.

## Use of Passive in Scientific Writing

One of the most well-known features of scientific writing, used to create an impersonal scientific text.

Idea

NOT WHO did something

But

WHAT was done

Differentiation between 2 uses of English:

Scientific use of English

-> no emotional expression (individual purged of his/hers whims and fancies)

Literary Use of language

-> focus on style & essence of literary writing "What often was thought bur never so well expressed".

-> IMRD (Introduction, Method, Discussion and Result) is a recurrent Internal pattern phenomenon->"Conceptual Framework"

Method Section of Sc.Journals

->Passive Voice distinguished feature (used by Scientific Community) useful because of:

- Help to novice researchers to write grammatically accurate
- Organization of their works systematically.

Interrogative forms in Sc. Research

-> arouse readers' interest and curiosity by questions.

Hedging device

-> rise of acceptability of the findings and the results.

Rhetorical Meaning in Scientific English

The quest for intellectual growth leads to new discoveries and therefore there is a need of new words for those new entities.

- Common words can be changed and reformulated to give a name to those new entities too.

- According to Close, R. (1965): When every day expressions are defined as technical terms, they are defined precisely and may then become distinct from their general use.

- Examples: PRESENTATION

COMMON MEANING: Display, demonstration.

VS

MEDICAL DISCOURSE: The part of the infant's body that appears first at the opening from the neck of the womb during child birth as perceived on inserting the finger into vagina.

- Complete different meaning in scientific words within the scientific discourse. They have been TECHNICALIZED: The vernacular becomes technical and specific or either a new word is coined to best suit the scientific meaning.

Use of Nominalization and Universality of scientific discourse.

- Nominalization often occurs in scientific texts representing events and qualities of objects not as verbs, adjectives and adverbs but as nouns

- Complex information packed into a compact unit. There is a tendency in using nominalization within the scientific community - Halliday (1988) said.

Ex: The temperature increases sharply

A sharp increase in temperature.

- Scientific English is Universal. It is universally acceptable since only those statements which are based on the following characteristics

Reason

Experiment

Rationale.

- No personal coloring —> Universal.

- Scientific discourse is a universal mode in all languages —> Textualization.

Use of Questions in Scientific Research Articles.

Most useful one: Interrogative Gambit.

- Which means: 'Use of questions in the organization of discourse in order to enable the readers' quick response and to make up their minds for the follow up'

- Frequently used in titles and headlines.

Some examples

Why should we bother to draw attention to the manufacturing of sophisticated weapons?

- Strong opposition among scientists —> Use of different devices to fight their ideas.

Frayed and facilities?

Cooling interference?

How are the scientists of face the challenge?

- Interrogative also used in addressing a highly complex subject.

.- No specific answer is provided.

.- Open debate.

.-Example: Who has the right to know of an individual's genetic make up?

.- Usually ethical problems.

.- Sometimes it implies the author's own opinion somehow.

- It provides a framework for the discourse. After that the author's own answer will come up into scene.

Use of Hedges in Scientific Research Articles

- Hedging: Expression of tentativeness and possibility.

- Hedging:

Increases conceptual fuzziness.

Provides: relatively lower degree of exactitude by using:

Epistemic main verbs: Suggest, propose, seem

Epistemic modal auxiliaries: may, might, can

Epistemic adverbs: Hypothetically, probably, likely

Tentative Reporting verbs

Tentative nouns

Like

Not only one interpretation.

Addressed to non-specific audience.

Helps the scientist to express crucial ideas with personal modesty and honesty.

Salager (1994): 'When a scientist goes to the heart of the matter, he is open to attack. As a consequence everything must be toned down: speculation can obviously be made but it must be apologized for.'