

However, there are several journals in Croatia that are oriented towards topics related exclusively to the Croatian language. An excellent example is *Jezik (Language)*, which publishes articles dealing with very specific topics like the Croatian standard language, grammar, and orthography. The international visibility of such a journal is very low, however it is of significant impact for Croatian philology. It has been very difficult, and at the same time also not that necessary, to achieve enhanced international visibility for this type of journal. Its profile, scope and potential audience are completely different from those pertaining to *Suvremena lingvistika*. *Jezik* is a journal with a significant national impact. One might conclude that *Jezik*, because it is published in Croatian and has low international visibility, is 'less valuable' and thus should be assessed as a journal of poorer quality. The point is that such evaluation would be false. As Professor Žic Fuchs (2014: 166) clearly points out, the Humanities (and the Social Sciences)¹ are in need of an integrated infrastructure that would finally showcase the richness and diversity found across all disciplines and all languages covered by these domains of research. ERIH (*European Reference Index for the Humanities*, ESF) and later ERIH PLUS have been attempts towards enhancing the visibility of journals within the Humanities², regardless of the language or the scope of the journal, thus preserving diversity in publication cultures within the Humanities.

In the last decade *Suvremena lingvistika* has not tried to join the trap set by 'hard sciences' and their assessment mechanisms. Although I have been strongly advised by different sources to 'go international by publishing exclusively in English', I have accepted only one part – the most important part – of the advice. *Suvremena lingvistika* did go international by using the benefits of all potential instruments that have been developed in the digital era of scientific publishing, of course within the available financial framework. The scope

of *Suvremena lingvistika* has been strongly founded upon the idea of presenting and contextualizing national research within the international framework. However, *Suvremena lingvistika* has never, nor will it ever (I am firmly convinced of this) forget its role and impact in building national scientific identity in Croatian philology and the Humanities in Croatia in general.

Endnotes

- 1 This article is based on three lectures I held. Two of them were held during the METM08 (Split, Croatia, 2008). *Commitment to national scientific community vs. international visibility and Does it really have to be in English?* (a brief overview was published in *Suvremena lingvistika* 66/2008). The third talk, *Journals in the Humanities between national and international*, was given at the conference held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Croatian scientific journal *Food Technology and Biotechnology* (Zagreb, Croatia, 2012).
- 2 I am primarily referring to the 90s when the editor in chief was Professor Milena Žic Fuchs, who at that time, when it wasn't a common practice in scientific publishing in the Humanities, insisted on making the journal internationally visible by means that were conceivable at the time. These were mostly indexing in relevant databases, distribution and exchange.
- 3 What I mean here is the development of terminology for new and rapidly developing disciplines that enter into Croatian linguistics.
- 4 Brackets inserted by IR.
- 5 For more details about the development and the role that both databases have had for the Humanities see Žic Fuchs (2014).

Reference

- Žic Fuchs, Milena. The Future of Publications in the Humanities: Possible Impacts in Research Assessments. In: P. Dávidházi (ed), *New Publication Cultures in the Humanities: Exploring the Paradigm Shift*. Amsterdam University Press, 2014: 147-173

Viewpoint

Out with the old, in with the new – words and phrases in fashion

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The English language, as I know it, is changing ever more rapidly since the internet and other types of fast communication technology entered the scene two or more decades ago. Accepting that languages are always in flux, many words used in earlier times have disappeared, as has been lucidly and amusingly portrayed by Mark Forsyth, but never at the rapidly accelerating rate we see today. There is no doubt that the two nations divided by a common language have had considerable influence; American English (AE) – is this becoming International English? and British English (BE), as Martin Cutts calls it¹, have now reached a point where it will soon be true to say the reverse – the UK and USA are two nations divided by different languages. But we (especially scientists) adapt and have got to know both out of necessity as they progressively diverge/evolve. I had to check whether we might call the different forms of English *dialects*. Therefore we will probably end up with languages just called "American" and "English." In writing a scientific (or any other) article, one strict rule is not to mix at least the spelling of words in AE and BE, although we may not yet have reached the stage where this applies also to particular phrases peculiar to one or other of these new languages. But where is scientific English going with its new words and phrases?

"There is no form of prose more difficult to understand and more tedious to read than the average scientific paper" *Francis Crick*

New words cannot be resisted because they are needed as new technology and jargon comes ever more into general usage. But we are also using some existing words differently from the past, often one word sufficing in many contexts where we have a number of more apposite words in BE, necessary if – as science demands – we need to be precise in all things including connotation (ie each being more appropriate in a particular context). Shakespeare and Swift would be turning in their graves if they knew what was going on today. The rule now seems to be never to use a short word if a long one can be found (see quotes below). Gone are the days in scientific papers when the right word is being carefully chosen. Perhaps this is because it is so much easier for authors around the world to stick to one word that by and large seems to suffice and is now in vogue. Examples are numerous; I have already ranted in previous essays about *evaluate* covering for probably 12-14 more appropriate verbs. The verb *measure* has all but disappeared, and yet Arthur Thomson (Lord Kelvin) famously stated of science that you really do not get to understand a phenomenon until you can measure it. Therefore I have chosen other examples that are now so embedded in current scientific articles that we are ending up with gross stereotyping of the language.

What others say

- "People think that I can teach them style. What stuff it all is! Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the secret of style." – *Matthew Arnold*
- "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style" – *Jonathan Swift*
- "Don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in. When you catch adjectives kill most of them – then the rest will be valuable" – *Mark Twain* from *Short Words* (1996:2)

Let us start with "taken together", which has become the preferred opening of the last paragraph in the majority of papers, whereas "in summary" or "in conclusion" (which do not have precisely the same meaning) are disappearing. More distressing, *taken together* is followed by "the results of our study show...". Where else could the results come from, and are the results making the conclusions or the authors? The whole of this opening gambit of the conclusion section is not only ugly, but totally redundant. Editors, please use your "red pens" – aka the delete button!

Have you noticed that the word *tool* now covers a huge range of objects, methods, devices and even ideas; in epidemiology, healthcare assessment and the like, many quite different items are bunched together under this one noun. A statistical method has become a tool, as has a questionnaire. We might soon have a "Materials and Tools" section; after all, FACS machines, stethoscopes and ultracentrifuges are indeed tools. Modern usage has adopted many other words to cover a multitude of more apt ones. *Obviously* was seen as too blunt and has been almost completely expunged from (scientific) papers by *clearly*. *Outcomes* (a truly ugly word) is quickly replacing results and findings, especially in medicine. *Outlook* is taking over from prognosis. *Has* almost always seems nowadays to be replaced by *possesses* or *exhibits*. *Key* is almost universally displacing crucial and critical (again, two words with quite different meanings in their correct contexts). *Physiology*, such a fundamental biological

discipline, is rarely mentioned today; having been replaced by *systems biology* (born to integrate molecular biology that started in the 1970s back into the realm of metabolism (yes, it is physiology, with lip-service to biochemistry). *Function*, inextricably linked to physiology, is now all about *playing a role in* – eg. “the function of alcohol dehydrogenase in...”.¹ Note how the word *important* comes into this phrase almost every time; the enzyme might be a minor “player” in some physiological process (function), but as far as the authors of papers are concerned, their chosen molecule for study is the kingpin! The importance is usually an attribute of the author’s attitude rather than the significance of an enzyme in a metabolic pathway; alas, very few authors understand metabolic control theory².

Even the word *do* is on the way out; today everything is *performed*. An experiment is performed, not done. While many Latin phrases are rapidly being dropped (eg. has become *such as*), it is odd that *via* is now commonly replacing *by* (even in media-speak). Will the verb to *show* soon be completely superseded by *to reveal* and to *demonstrate*? I have mentioned in previous essays that *probably* and *possibly* (two very useful words that surely do not mean the same thing) are now seldom used; instead we have to put up with the ugly word *likely* (eg this event is *likely due to*... - is this meant to be possibly or probably due to, as there is no distinction?).

“Never use a long word if there is a shorter one.” George Orwell

Is the word *findings* on its way out? We hear more of “evidences” (yes, the plural!) these days. *Strongly* and *markedly* have almost universally become *dramatically*. *Elevates* takes the place of *increases*, just as *declines* is ousted by *decreases*. In addition now seems preferred to *also*. While there are numerous other examples that I could include, I will finish up with another word that pops up everywhere, not only in the scientific literature, but everywhere, viz *impact*, in use now as much as a verb as a noun. Could it be that the two similar words, *effect* and *affect*, are too difficult for the non-native English speaker to distinguish and use appropriately?

Last, and not unexpectedly, let me bring in the word *surprisingly*. This word appears in many papers these days. What it means is that the authors, in testing a hypothesis, did an experiment and got a result different from the expected. Oh, dear, they were wrong – and nature never tells a lie; so their little cherished hypothesis has to go out of the window.

The result might not have been anticipated, but the use of the word *surprisingly* borders on the banal, almost childish.

Native speakers ought to know the difference and not follow the herd, but they are as guilty. If they could set an example in this case and all the others, things might improve and papers would be less word-stereotyped. However, I am pessimistic because it seems too late to turn the tide. While authors will be most reluctant to oblige, I would suggest that Editors can do much more to weed out these ugly and/or inappropriate words before good BE goes into severe decline (not decrease in this case!). For anyone wishing to publish, I can thoroughly recommend Martin Cutts’ book³ as an excellent follow-up to the great Sir Ernest Gowers’ *Plain Words*⁴, published back in the 1940s to rid the UK civil service of writing very unctivil English.*

References

- 1 Forsyth M. *The Horological*. IconBooks, London, 2013. 978-184831598-3
- 2 Cutts M. *Oxford Guide to Plain English*, 4th Edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2013. ISBN 978-0-19-966917-2
- 3 Marsh D. *For Who (sic) the Bell Tolls?*. Guardian Books, 2014. ISBN 978-1-783-35052-0
- 4 Kell D. *Understanding the Control of Metabolism*. Portland Press, 1997. London. 1-85578-047-X.
- 5 Gowers E. *Plain Words: A Guide To The Use Of English*, 1948; Revised and updated by Rebecca Gowers, 2014.

Note

*I was surprised to learn recently that at least four steps were also taken in the USA to get plain English used more often by all. The public needs to be better informed at a level people can generally understand. Laws only work when the majority of people see the need for them and insist on them, which is why these measures have had little effect (or should that be *impact*?).

- Carter 1978 - order 12-044 - requires Regulations to be written in plain English.
- Clinton 1998 - memorandum to both houses of the United States Congress - Plain Language in Government Writing.
- Securities and Exchange Commission (USA) demanded stocks and bonds prospectuses to be in Plain English.
- Center for Plain Language 2010 - the Plain Writing Act was passed by both houses of the US government.

Reports of meetings

2015 European Meeting of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP)

21-22 January 2015, London

With the theme “Medical Publications for Better Patient Care: Integrity, Innovation, and Impact” as a remit, 200-plus members from 14 countries attended ISMPP’s European Meeting in the St. Paul’s area of London. Over the two days, a roster of distinguished faculty from throughout Europe and the USA provided attendees with a diverse slate of educational offerings with an awareness of the importance of the patient connection in medical publication at their core.

Day 1 opened with a review of developments emerging in medical publications for doctors, patients, and their families. To wrap the meeting’s first day, Al Weigel, ISMPP’s President and Chief Operating Officer, spoke on the topics of strategic imperatives to fulfill the Society’s new mission and vision and ISMPP’s groundbreaking educational forums, and John Gonzalez reported on ISMPP’s Certified Medical Publication Professional certification programme.

Day 2 began with a 90-minute session, during which attendees could choose two of three breakout where they could learn about publication challenges associated with the specialist areas of generics, orphan drugs, and vaccines, acquire an understanding of regulatory requirements governing approval in each area, and discover how to identify key challenges and opportunities for publication activities. Later, professionals whose job responsibilities include publications in Europe offered their perspectives on working in these disparate countries and solutions for confronting complex regulations, differences in cultural and social structures, language barriers, and other obstacles involved with the planning and development of publications in diverse and often challenging environments.

In the afternoon, an interactive, moderator-led panel discussion involved various publication stakeholders, including a patient-facing physician, nurse, patient blogger, and pharmaceutical representative and two journalists who cover healthcare. They exchanged views as to pressures confronting them in their roles as publication stakeholders, their individual priorities and needs in utilizing medical publications, and suggestions for improving the overall process and enhancing credibility. The meeting wrapped up with a somewhat idiosyncratic, yet compelling send-off address delivered by Henry Marsh, a renowned British neurosurgeon whose pioneering work in the Ukraine was featured in the 2008 award-winning BBC documentary, *The English Surgeon*. His best-selling memoir, *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery*, was published to universal acclaim in 2014 and intrigued reviewers and readers alike with its candid glimpse into his amazing life.

For those unable to attend this year’s meeting, content is posted in the Archives section of the ISMPP website (<http://www.ismpp.org/european-meeting-archive2>).

Next, peer-reviewed research, selected from abstracts submitted for consideration, was presented in a format inspired by “speed dating,” whereby presenters had only five minutes to describe their research, at which point a bell would sound. The four topics were an evaluation of PubMed Commons; a study of the use of social media by medical researchers and healthcare professionals; a review of open-access clinical trials published in leading hybrid journals; and factors influencing manuscript development time.

This year was the first that round tables were incorporated into ISMPP’s European meeting programming, and their introduction on the afternoon of Day 1 met with apparent success. Attendees clamoured to seat themselves at different moderator-led, themed tables for a 30-minute conversation of relevant topics with a group of peers. The expert moderators guided participants in the discussion of 11 different topics; among the most popular were patient advocacy, data disclosure/transparency, and the evolution of peer review. At the end of the 30 minutes, participants had the opportunity to move to a second table and topic.

Day 1 concluded with the 2015 keynote presentation and an ISMPP update. The 2015 keynote presentation was unique

in that it was delivered by two speakers. The first, Richard Stephens, is a patient advocate who recently assumed a role as co-editor of a new journal from BioMed Central that is co-produced and peer reviewed by patients and whose focus is on patient engagement in research. The second was Adrian Tookman, a London physician with a large in-patient and out-patient clinical practice providing palliative care. Both shared expertise and insight into the significance of medical publications for doctors, patients, and their families. To wrap the meeting’s first day, Al Weigel, ISMPP’s President and Chief Operating Officer, spoke on the topics of strategic imperatives to fulfill the Society’s new mission and vision and ISMPP’s groundbreaking educational forums, and John Gonzalez reported on ISMPP’s Certified Medical Publication Professional certification programme.

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