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MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS, MOBILE LANGUAGE

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The present paper addresses essential discourse elements of the English language of science in light of the so-called Anglo-American intellectual style. Emphasised here are: various linguistic devices of compression (writing succinctly, avoiding verbosity and negation etc.), keeping subject and verb close together, and common revision patterns. Key standardized discourse models and academic vocabulary – as well as their Ukrainian equivalents – are also discussed. Special attention is given to Active vs. Passive voice usage, and adequate language framing of the author's viewpoint in scientific discourse.

Introduction

How has technology changed communication? We've come a long way since the first words ever transmitted via communications technology in 1844 – the phrase from Torah chosen by Samuel Morse: “*what hath God wrought.*” The first sms-message – “*Merry Christmas*” – was sent by the test engineer of the British Sema Group company in 1992. The present paper aims to explore some ways how technology and culture impact written communication – both in science, and in everyday life.

According to Jacob Silverman, “except for in-person, speech-based communication, it could be argued that all communication is technologically based. With the advent of written language – itself a kind of technology – humanity experimented with varying forms of technology to record their thoughts.

In many respects, with the proliferation of communications technologies, it increasingly falls to each individual to choose with which of these technologies he or she will engage. After all, it's not as if there is a shortage of technological gadgetry out there for the using. In our age of abundance, it's as much of a philosophical choice as a practical or economic one”. [9] The efficient use of language to achieve the maximum effect for the minimum effort is evident in the language used in information and communications technology. For example, in radio communication short and clear commands and replies are critical: *Roger* (Вас зрозумів. – у радіозв'язку та як відповідь на наказ або повідомлення); *wilco* (Вас зрозумів, виконую. – у радіозв'язку); “*wilco*” means “will comply”, it indicates that message just received will be complied with.

Discussion

A quest for comprehensibility of information, on the one hand, and its compression, on the other, has brought about the idea of “plain English” or crystal-

clear language. Plain English can be broadly defined as writing that the intended audience can read and understand the first time they read it. Overall, using plain, simple language is about compressing information, mainly through the following:

- avoiding slang, jargon, idioms, as well as symbols and specific terminology except internationally recognized words and phrases, including various abbreviations (e.g. acronyms), and using international words (though some of them may actually be false cognates or “false friends”); employing the words that are easier to pronounce;
- writing succinctly: using simple tenses; using simple action verbs instead of phrasal verbs and be verbs;
- keeping subject and verb close together;
- avoiding verbosity;
- keeping negation to a “minimum necessary”;
- adequately employing Active and Passive voice and using appropriate authorial voice.

Plain English takes into consideration language alongside design and layout.

It emphasizes avoiding clichés and jargon. For example, it suggests that we use “every day” instead of “on a daily basis”, “conclusion” in place of “bottom line” etc. Also, when dealing with international audiences, expressing time becomes critical. Some countries the 24 hour clock, others use *a.m.* and *p.m.* Moreover, in Europe, the day ends at 24.00 and starts at 00 (which is, technically speaking, the same). In the US, 12:00 a.m. is the beginning of the day. By the way, when making a hotel reservation, Russians and Ukrainians will speak of the number of “days”, while in English the word “nights” is used. It is a good idea to use International Standard (ISO) for expressing time, for example: 17:30:00 (which is 5.30 p.m.). One more

confusing thing is the date. The date 05/07/08, which could be put 05-07-08, 05.07.08, can mean “May 7, 2008” or “July 5, 2008”. International standard (ISO) requires writing the name of the month and the year in full, e.g. 5 July 2008.

Another problem arises out of using “the false friends (or “frenemies”) of a translator.” For example, in Ukrainian, the word “актуальний” is NOT rendered into English as “actual”. “Actual” is translated as “фактичний”; “реальний”, and “актуальний” is “timely”, “high priority”. Similarly, “наукова актуальність” is “scientific relevance.” More examples: in Ukrainian, the word “aggressive” conveys only negative meaning of “hostile,” “offensive.” In English, however, “aggressive” can also mean—depending on context – “active,” which is obviously positive appraisal. In English, “decade” means “10 years”; in Ukrainian, “декада” is “10 days”. At this point, let us emphasize some more language issues, namely specific words and lexical bundles. First and foremost: the word “research” is never pluralized in English: *one research*; *a lot of research* (одне дослідження; багато досліджень). The word “technique” is rendered as “метод”, but not “техніка”. By “techniques” native speakers of English mean “methods”, “procedures”, “approaches” (the word “техніка” is translated as “technology”). More similar examples: “humanities” or “humanistic studies” – гуманітарні науки,

“human sciences” – гуманітарні та соціальні науки,

“humane” – гуманний; цивілізований;

“humanitarian (прикметник) (help)” – гуманітарний, гуманітарна (допомога),

“humanitarian” (іменник) – гуманіст;

“annotation” – короткий коментар (у книгах),

“abstract”, “summary” – анотація;

“synopsis” – автореферат дисертації;

“scientific relevance”, “timeliness” – актуальність дослідження;

“high priority”; “timely” – актуальний (науковому сенсі);

“to be high on research agenda”; “to show/to be of high scientific relevance” – “бути актуальним у науковому сенсі”

“to obtain/to get (research) results” – отримувати результати наукових досліджень/наукового пошуку” (NOT *receive!*);

“challenge” – складна задача/проблема, яку цікаво вирішити/розв’язати; виклик; випробування

“it seems” – очевидно, вочевидь;

“to consist of” – складатися (і)з;

“to consist in” – полягати у чомусь;

“regarding” / “in regard to” / “with regard to” / “as regards” / “in this regard”;

“as to”/ “as for”; “as far as ... is/are concerned”; “speaking of”; “considering”; “touching”; “when it comes to”; “in this respect”; “for that matter” – стосовно; щодо; коли йдеться/ідеться (про); що стосується; у зв’язку (і)з; у зв’язку (і)з цим (NOT “in connection with”!)

“in (the) light of”; “from the perspective of”; “in view of; from the standpoint of; through the prism of” – з огляду на; на підставі; беручи до уваги; у світлі; з позиції; крізь призму; коли йдеться/ідеться (про); “feature(s)”, “trait(s)”; “characteristic(s)”; “specificity” – особливості (NOT *peculiarities!*).

on the internet/Internet – в інтернеті/в Інтернеті
Attention should be paid to the following words that differ in meaning depending on context:

“since”

1) з (якогось часу) when used with time markers (since 2013/last year/then etc.)

2) тому, що; через те, що; позаяк; адже (“because”) when there are no time markers (*I’m at a loss since I don’t know what to do.*)

“to maintain” –

1) стверджувати; 2) тримати, підтримувати

“to suggest” –

1) пропонувати; 2) наводити на думку

“to discover” –

1) робити відкриття; (уперше) відкривати, винаходити (“to pioneer”)

2) виявляти; знаходити (“to find (out)”; “to reveal”)

“to appear”

1) з’являтися

2) видаватися (“to seem”, in the infinitive constructions)

“to challenge” –

1) кидати виклик (“to throw down the gauntlet”; “to dare”)

2) ставити під сумнів; не погоджуватися (“to disagree”; “to dissent”; “to demur”; “to object (to)”; “to challenge”

“to argue”

1) уважати, гадати (“to think”/“to believe”)

2) дискутувати (“to dispute”; “to debate”)

3) сперечатися (“to altercate”; “to quarrel”)

“to argue for” – дискутувати; висувати аргументи за; виступати за

“to argue against” – висувати аргументи проти, бути/виступати проти.

“in fact,”

1) фактично; власне кажучи (“actually”)

2) крім цього; на додачу (“in addition”/“in addition to”)

3) насправді (маркує наступне заперечення);

4) а саме; тобто; себто (“namely”)

5) підсумовуючи(,)у (кінцевому) підсумку (“in conclusion(,)”) [1].

If one uses terms, brand names and/or abbreviations – clear definitions and thorough explanations should be given upon introduction. It is generally preferable to use “for example” instead of “e.g.”, “jargon” rather than “gobbledygook”, “excellent” in place of “superb”, “before” instead of “prior to”, “24 hours a day 7 days a week” rather than “24/7”, “to cancel/to postpone” instead of “to call off”; “to work really hard” vs. “to burn midnight oil”, “bureaucracy” instead of “red tape”, “why?” rather than “how come?”; “can” instead of “has/have the ability to.”

On the one hand, we have lots on new field-specific terminology, and on the other – many new words we use in everyday speech. And most of them come from English – the international *lingua franca* of today’s science. Let’s take, for example, the following elements of “mobile language”:

- *mobile/cell phone* – мобільний телефон/мобілка/сотовий (телефон)
- *smartphone* смартфон
- *iPhone* айфон
- *iPad* ай-пед (не *айпад)
- *SIM card* СІМ карта
- *internet/Internet* інтернет
- *wi-fi* вай-фай // бездротовий/безпроводовий інтернет
- *display* дисплей
- *link* (веб-посилання)
- *facebook, twitter, google* фейсбук, твіттер, гугл; *to google* (за)гуглити
- *GPS navigator* Джі Пі Ес (навігатор)
- *USB/universal serial bus* ю ес бі/універсальна послідовна шина
- *bluetooth* блютус
- *router* маршрутизатор/рутер (не *роутер!)
- *phablet* (phone + tablet) – телешет (телефон+планшет)
- *Android* андроїд
- *widget* віджет або елемент графічного інтерфейса взаємодії з користувачем
- *GUI/goosey* – *graphical user interface* графічний інтерфейс користувача/графічний інтерфейс взаємодії з користувачем або гуї
- *thumb skills* сенсорно-дисплейні навички
- *instant messaging* інстант меседжінг
- *sms* – *short messaging system* смс/смс повідомлення
- *flood*– флад (не *флуд!);
- *thumb culture* –уміння вправно маніпулювати пальцями рук при роботі з сенсорними

дисплеями (мобільних телефонів, комп’ютерів тощо);

- *hashtag* - гештег.

The so-called *sms-lingo* is about “minimum effort, maximum effect.” Here belong:

- letters, figures, and symbols represent words or parts of words:

r – *are* ; *-er*

u – *you*

y – *why*

b – *be*

c – *see /sea*

1 – *one*

2 – *to; too; two*

4 – *for; four*

8 – *eight; -ate; -ait*

@ – *at*

tho – *though*

- several letters replacing a word:

ez – *easy* (*z is pronounced as zed OR zee*)

plz – *please*

- abbreviations (pronounced as separate letters):

asap / A.S.A.P. (*as soon as possible*) – якомога скоріше

brb (*will be right back*) – незабаром повернуся

btw (*by the way*) – між іншим; до речі

cu (*c-u: see you*) – побачимось

GN (*good night*) – (на) добраніч

GL (*good luck*) – хай щастить

IMHO/imho (*in my humble opinion*) – на мою скромну думку

lol (*laughing out loud*) сміюся

OMG (*Oh my God*) – О, Боже

pcm – (*please call me*) – будь ласка, зателефонуй(те) мені

JK – (*just kidding*) – жарт(ую)

IDK – (*I don't know*) – не знаю

TBA (*to be announced*) – буде повідомлено

TBD – (*to be defined*) – (досі) невизначений; потребує уточнення

Tu (vm) (*Thank you (very much)*) – (дуже) дякую

YAW (*you are welcome*) – прошу; нема за що

- acronyms (pronounced as words):

HAND (*have a nice day*) – бажаю Вам гарного дня

KISS (*keep it simple, stupid*) – а можна простіше?

- letters and figures hybrids:

THNX (*thanks*) дякую

ruok – (*are you ok? : r/are -u /you- OK*) – У Вас усе гаразд?

2day (*to/ day*) – сьогодні

gr8 (*great: gr+eat*) – чудово

l8 (*late: l+ate*) – пізно

l8r (*late*: l+ate+r (er) – пізніше

w8 (*wait*: w+ait) – зачекай(те)

B4 (*before*: b+four) – до

4u (*for you*) – для Вас; для тебе

4get (*forget*: for+get) – забудь

some1 (*someone*: some+one) – хтось

• various pictograms, smilies, emoticons:

:) :-) :] ☺ – посмішка

:D =D – широка усмішка; сміх

:(:[☹ – невдоволення; похмурий вираз обличчя

;) ;-) – підморгування; саркастичний коментар

:\ – вагання

@>--; – троянда

<3 – кохання, любов

</3 – розбите серце

HOXO (*hugs and kisses – літери Х та О візуально нагадують поцілунок та обійми*) – обіймаю, цілую

Many more goods examples are provided by Paul McFedries, and his website WordSpy. And many of them are compressed words, or, linguistically speaking, **portmateau words** (гібридні слова; слова-телескопи) like smog (smoke+fog), frenemy (friend+enemy), avionics aviation+electronics). The term was coined by Lewis Carrol in 1872, based on the concept of two words packed together, like a portmateau. For instance:

Globish (*global English*) – the simplified English spoken by many nonnative English speakers; English that uses a limited vocabulary and basic syntax to help nonnative English speakers communicate; it was suggested by Jean-Paul Nerriere, a retired vice president of I.B.M., and is made up of a limited vocabulary of 1,500 words;

netco (*net + company*) – an Internet-based company;

ringxiety (*ringtone + anxiety*)

1) the confusion experienced by a group of people when a cell phone rings and no one is sure whose phone it is;
2) mistaking a faint sound for the ringing of one's cell phone;

Swiss Army phone – a cell phone that includes multiple non-voice features such as a digital camera, digital audio player, and electronic organizer;

nomophobia (“no mobile phone” phobia) – the fear of being without your mobile phone or without a cellular signal;

smartphoneography (*smart phone photography*) – photography using a smartphone's built-in camera

compunications (*computer + communications*) – any form of computer-based communication, including e-mail, fax, and voice mail;

telematics (*telecommunications + informatics*) – the long-distance communication of computer data;

ungoogleable – a person for whom no information appears in an Internet search engine, particularly Google;

cell yell – excessively loud cell phone talking;

to piggyback – to use a wireless Internet connection without permission;

ambient findability – the ability to find anyone or anything from anywhere at anytime. [6]

The readers need to find information quickly. The old rule stating that the new information is usually followed by an old one, still holds true. Another good idea is to employ extensive clarifying, paraphrasing and exemplifying when expressing ideas.

The readers skim and scan the text *before* reading it. Thus it is necessary to facilitate information decoding. It is quite easy by employing several techniques. First, the text should be properly structured in a clear-cut, linear manner. Sentences should be short and effective, making the text as consistent and lucid as possible.

In fact, it was Norwegian mathematician and sociologist Johan Galtung who first described four basic “intellectual styles” (ways of presenting thoughts in writing), i.e. “Saxonic”, “Gallic”, “Teutonic”, and “Nipponic” [4]. Some time earlier the US linguist Robert Kaplan noticed similar phenomenon – cross-cultural differences in cultural thought patterns – English, Semitic, Russian, Romance and Oriental ones [5]. Consider just one example: the writings by Ukrainians and Russians usually employ a lot of digressions (with sentences beginning on one page and ending on another), which makes the material barely readable for Anglo-American audience. Thus writing in English calls for compression, on the one hand, and clarity, on the other.

A good way to compress or tighten up writings is employing the **simple tenses** – the past, present, or future. They're much clearer than the compound tenses – the past progressive, present progressive, or present perfect; things like: “I had been studying,” “I had wanted to talk to you,” or “We will have completed it by May.” Sometimes you'll need a compound tense to capture an exact meaning. But don't use them unless you have to. To give a feeling of things happening in the sentence, use action verbs instead of be verbs. Action verbs appeal to the senses; especially the sense of sight, movement, energy. Cut out weak verbs, two-word phrases containing an empty verb like *make* or *do*, plus a noun, where one word would suffice. For example:

We made arrangements for a conference to be held in November.

A better option: We arranged for a conference to be held in November.

Another important point is **keeping subject and verb close together**, e.g.:

DO NOT USE:

The purpose of this paper is to address ...

It is our conclusion that...

Also, start with a substantive subject (s/he, the paper; the article; this issue etc.):

DO NOT USE:

It seems that he knows it.
There are many good points in this post.

USE:

This paper aims to address...
This paper addresses...
We conclude that ...

USE:

He seems to know it.
This post has many good points. [2]

Keep your document(s) succinct. Which means do not overwrite! Limiting oneself to discussing no more than three points at one time, with constant focusing on them, is a must. The sentences should be as short as possible (no more than approximately 27 words in one sentence). On the other hand, messages should NOT be too brief – they can become unclear and leave out crucial information. Remember what David Silverman said in his work “When Clarity is Not the Same as Brevity: “being brief is important but not at the risk of being misunderstood.” [7] The general rule is: one idea per paragraph. Express your main point in the first sentence. Then use strong and vivid supporting details. Appropriate examples, emphasizing key ideas by using boldface, bullets, and listings of items are important too. Getting back to David Silverman and his another work “How to be Successful in Business Writing: Don’t be Dickens”, make the material “scannable.” [8]. Like this:

Marketers direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers. Marketers attempt to bring both the producers and the consumers together.

- **Producers** are organizations that create goods and services.
- **Consumers** are those who buy and use goods and services for personal satisfaction.
- **Industrial buyers** are those who buy goods and services for business, rather than for personal use. (Peterson)

As William Strunk put it in his classic book “The elements of style”: “vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.” [10]

Consider the following **revision patterns to avoid verbosity**:

- eliminate “that-phrases” and also “which-phrases”:
this is the issue ~~that~~ many people talk about”
what I mean to say is ~~that~~ ...
the approach ~~that was~~ used – the used approach

~~that we need more time is obvious~~
~~the ideas which that are described~~
~~information which has indirect bearing on the issue~~
~~information with indirect bearing on the issue~~

- revise “there is/are phrases”
~~there have been studied ...~~ we studied ...
- revise both of the above:
~~There have been several long-run changes that~~
~~have helped ...~~
- eliminate “empty phrases” like “as a matter of fact”, “kind of.” “you know”
- use adjectives or nouns as adjectives instead of of-phrases:
“laboratory equipment” instead of “the equipment of the laboratory”
- avoid cumbersome (long and difficult to understand) sentences;
- note revisions like:

~~in order to~~
~~due to the fact that~~ – because
~~by means of~~
~~for the purpose of~~
~~prior to~~ before
~~if this is the case~~ – if so
~~in the attempt to~~ – attempting
~~in response to~~ – responding
~~has/have the ability to~~ – can
~~for the solution of the problem~~ – to solve the problem /
for solving the problem
~~we made the analysis of~~ – we analyzed
~~in the attempt to~~ – attempting
~~in the event of~~ – if
~~It is more important~~ – More importantly,
X(s) is/are also discussed ~~in this article~~
~~as the methodology there is used the method of ..., the~~
~~usage of which has allowed to reveal ...~~
the method of ... is used to reveal...
~~end-result; small in size; a duration of 3 days; basic~~
~~fundamentals;~~
~~in an analysis, they found;~~
~~in such a manner~~ – so;
~~in the form of~~ – as;
~~by using~~ – with;
~~the work performed;~~
~~the images that represent~~ information – the images
representing information;
~~can result in reducing~~ – can reduce;
~~is an illustration~~ – illustrates;
~~may well continue to be~~ – may remain;
~~in this paper we describe~~ – the paper describes;
~~for the solution of the problem~~ – to solve the problem
/for solving the problem;
X is needed ~~if one is~~ to ... ;

~~one can search it in Google – it is searchable in Google~~
~~X makes it possible for the users to compose – X~~
~~enables users to compose;~~
~~It appears that it is~~ The presence of young children ~~that~~
~~is seems to be the most important factor;~~
~~It is interesting to note – Interestingly;~~
~~It is surprising – Surprisingly;~~
~~But what is more serious is the fact that – more seriously, ;~~
~~It is a good idea to solve this problem – this problem is~~
~~worth solving.~~ [1; 2; 3].

When a sentence has two or more negatives, for example: “it’s not that we are unaware of it” (instead of: “we are aware of it”) s/he will often have to spend more time to figure it out. Used alone in a sentence, negative words (*no; not; nothing; unaware*) are usually fine: “That is not my cup of tea.” In warnings, a negative may even be preferable:

“Do not use ...”; “Never ..”.

But do not overdo it – don’t add *more* negatives like:

I read this book not without interest

I read this book with interest

The next point is using Active vs. Passive voice. The Passive voice is often used to create the so-called “objectivity effect”; concentrate on the subject itself, especially in the language of science. In such cases, it is put in the very beginning of a sentence:

This technology is widely used nowadays.

It can be concluded that the argument is valid.

It can also be used to “**hide**” the agent for some reason (say, the agent may be unknown, redundant, or ... someone to blame):

Potatoes are grown in almost every country.

English is spoken worldwide.

The message was misinterpreted.

And, of course, there are cases *only* Passive Voice is be used:

I was born in September.

But generally it is preferable to use Active rather than Passive voice. For example

Your order will be delivered in 3 working days. *We will deliver your order in 3 working days.*

~~As can be seen from table 7...~~ *Table 7 shows ...*

~~recently done~~ research *recent research*

~~In this paper it is analyzed ...~~ *we analyze ...*

~~There it is analyzed ...~~

Again, there are cases when they may be used interchangeably, though in the examples that follow, the first version below is much less “human” than the other five:

It can/could be concluded...

One can conclude ...

I conclude ...

We conclude ...

You can conclude ...

The conclusion is...

When it comes to expressing authorial voice, let us note that while it is natural to use explicit “I” in English, many other languages, for example, Slavic, consider it impolite. Therefore, it seems like a safer bet to stick with universal *pluralis auctoris* or *pluralis inclusivus* – “we” – a case of coexistence of both. Another relevant point is about “personalizing” discourse through various linguistic devices conveying “you and I” attitude. Here belong phrases like *let us/let’s; (now) let’s turn to; you could/may; (please) note; consider; think of* etc. [1; 2]

Conclusions

Thus we can conclude that the English language tends to becoming ever so mobile and compressed. The reason for this may be that the universal tendency for “economy of/in language” – triggered by rapid technological development – needs adequate language to reflect the emerging phenomena, all the way. Today, writing in English – in both everyday and research settings – is basically about avoiding miscommunication by making the writings clear and easy to understand. Ideally, they should be adequately comprehended by any person in any country of the world.

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