

Writing Style for Research Publication

Prof (Mrs). Sathiyalatha Sarathi¹, Yerram Sairama Krishna Reddy²

¹Vice-Principal, HOD, Department Of Research, Sree Balaji College of Nursing, Chromepet, Chennai, India

²Nursing Tutor, Sree Balaji College of Nursing, Chromepet, Chennai, India

Abstract: *Writing style and skill is the important component in research article publication. When carrying out a research study, we need to think carefully about publication strategy. It is important to write in a reader-friendly way so that people can understand our article and enjoy reading it. A Simple style with short words and short sentences is nearly always best. Avoid trying to impress people with long words, and do not use thesaurus to find alternative words. Remember that your style and language must be universally meaningful and culturally sensitive.*

Keywords: Abbreviations, Jargon, poor writing style, over use of words

1. Introduction

“The administrator with a sense for style hates waste
The engineer with a sense for style economizes his material
The artisan with a sense for style prefers good work.
Style is the ultimate mortality of mind”

Alferd North Whitehead

Good scientific writing is not only a matter of correctness, but also stylistic conversations used in a particular field of science.

What is style in the context of scientific writing?

Robert day defines, “style” as the personality as a scientific manuscript. He emphasizes that each publication has its own “personality”, dictated by both the

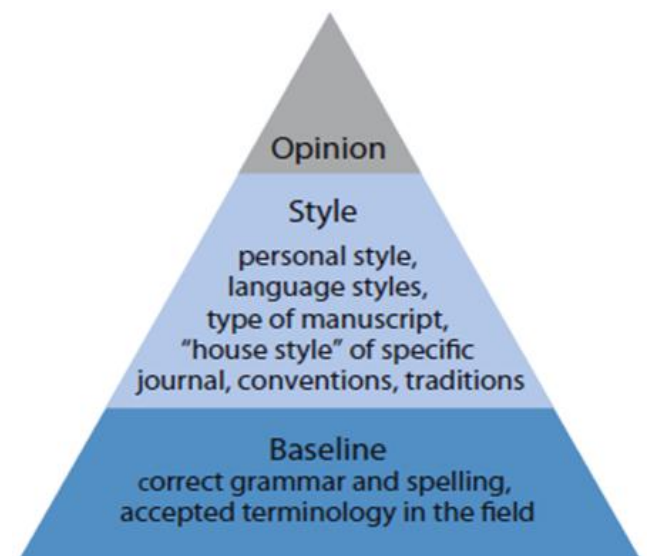
- The writing style used
- And the particular journal’s editorial requirements

Need of style in scientific writing

- A clear consistent writing style facilitates the “digestion” of the scientific message.
- It also shortens the “time consuming process” of editing and to make the task enjoyable.

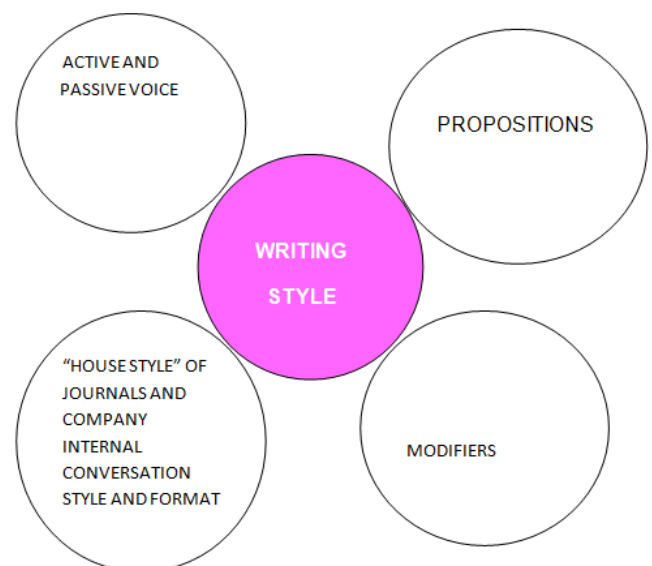
The BASO pyramid of scientific writing

This pyramid illustrates various levels of language in scientific writing.



The second level in BASO pyramid of scientific writing is “style”

Writing Style Concerns about the Following



Active Voice Vs Passive Voice

Active voice

If the subject of the sentence performs the action, the sentence is in the active voice.

Passive Voice: If the subject of the sentence is recipient of the action. The sentence is passive.

Example:

ACTIVE – The team studied genetic mutation

PASSIVE – The genetic mutations were studied by them.

Although the two sentences say more or less the same thing. The emphasis is different.

The active voice emphasis stresses the “doer” or the subject.

The passive voice emphasis the agent. (i.e. genetic mutation)

Best Choice in Scientific Writing

Use of active words most of the time because it is more direct and less wordy.

Type of Prepositions:

TYPE OF PREPOSITION	EXAMPLES
<i>Time/date</i>	<i>at, by, on, before, in, from, since, for, during, to, until, after</i>
<i>Movement</i>	<i>from, to, at, in, by, into, onto, off, out, out of, over, under</i>
<i>Location</i>	<i>in, above, over, under, below, beneath, underneath, between, behind, among, with</i>
<i>Limitation</i>	<i>but, except, without</i>

Over Use of Propositions

- ❖ Scientific writers often use them too liberally because rewarding of the sentence would mean a special effort.
- ❖ Over use of propositions in scientific writing is the single most important cause of confused messages.

Example:

Don't use: In order to confirm the data

Use: to confirm the data

Healthy Ratio of Proposition

The ratio of prepositions to other words is < 1:5. Because the “of” in “analysis of variance” is part of a fixed term, this preposition must be retained.

Limiting Midifiers and Other Decorative Words:

Modifiers specify or describe the meaning of another term. In most cases, modifiers are;

- Adjectives

Healthy Ratio of Passive/Active Formulations

Although the active voice should be our first choice, the exclusive use of active sentence is sometimes inappropriate and often “impossible”. Hence the proportion of passive verbs should not exceed 30%.

The Verb “TO BE” in copula formulations

Active voice concerns the abundance of the verb “to be” in scientific literature. But it also be used as an auxiliary in passive voice which is called as “coupla” formulations.

Coupla formulations are frequently essential which makes the sentence more interesting.

Propositions

Propositions as an enormously versatile part of grammer, without propositions clear communications would not be possible.

- Adverbs
- Nouns

Examples

Adjectives – a large patient population

Positive serum samples

Adverbs – the deeply colored strain

A very successful experiment

Noun – regression line

Need of Modifiers on Scientific Writing

Modifiers add richness, sparkle and precession. So that we can avoid dull descriptions.

Over Use of Modifiers/Decorative Words

- ❖ Too many modifiers do not add information, but rather obscure the actual message

- ❖ Overloading scientific statements with unnecessary decorative word distracts the reader.

Example:

Excessive use of modifier

❶ *Excessive use of modifiers:* These impressive as well as clinically and statistically significant data are of great and unique importance to this rather poorly researched field of neurobiological science and will substantially add to the presently still modest knowledge of cognitive processing in the elderly.

Fewer Modifier

❶ *Fewer modifiers:* These statistically significant data substantially add to the current understanding of cognitive processing in the elderly.

Modifier Stringer

Some languages (German) permit the use “modifier stringer” to describe another word usually a noun.

Example: Modifier strings in sentences

This awkward sentence can only cure by modifier stringers (i.e. replacing some nouns with verbs)

The blinded report procedure planning meeting organization was done the clinical trial monitor

Acceptable use of modifiers

The clinical trial monitor organized meeting to plan the blinded report procedure.

Modifier strings in names

Peer review congress advisory board, clinical research and development decision making steps and procedure

Avoid modifier strings in sentence, names and t

House Style: Most good journal provide detailed instruction for authors of manuscripts seeking publication. Such instructions are commonly referred to as journals “house style”. Although individual house style may still vary to some extent, considerable effort as given into harmonizing standard and format among scientific journals.

Need of “House Style in Scientific Journals”

- House style of the scientific journal should be accordance with current version of the guidelines.
- Adherence to this guidelines improves the quality and clarity of manuscripts submitted to any journals, as well as the ease of editing

Company – Internal Conventions of Style and Format

Some organization maintains a tradition of casual reporting. The tradition of poor writing is often handled down from supervisors to staff members, who, in turn passes it on to new employee with limited writing experiences

The most frequent deficiencies of traditional style conversations are

- Poorly designed templates for pre clinical, clinical and technical documents
- Jargonized writing and use of “inbred” terms with uncertain meaning.
- Mixing of British and the American spelling within and across the documents
- Modifiers strings and misuse of adjective and adverb.
- Exclusive use of passive voice to avoid the naming of responsible persons.
- ❖ Poor writing style, handled down by tradition will delay review of the document. This, in turn, prolongs the ‘time to market’ of publications and application for marketing authorizations of the new drug.
- ❖ An internal style manual to be used by all contributors can be in great help.

Poor Writing Style

Poor writing style includes the following

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1. Poor presentation
2. Jargon
3. Cliches
4. Ambiguous and flowery language
5. Longer words than necessary.
6. More words than necessary

I. Poor Presentation

Paragraphs (too short)
Sentence (too long)

1. Jargon

Difficult for others to understand the words.

2. Cliches

Phrase or idea that has been over used and has become uninteresting
e.g. At the end of the day
the Bottom line
swept under the carpet.

3. Ambiguous language.

Having more than one meaning which is not clear.
e.g. we had the children for dinner.

4. Longer words than necessary

- ✓ Longer words - Shorter words
- ✓ rather than - use
- ✓ the maintenance of - maintaining
- ✓ the development of - developing
- ✓ with regard to - about
- ✓ it would seem that - it seems that
- ✓ a number of - several
- ✓ in order to - to
- ✓ true to say - true
- ✓ of the opinion - think
- ✓ period of time - time

5. More words than necessary

Examples

- Don't use
- over a period of five years
- use
- over five years

Examples:

- Don't use
- in Smith's (2003) study it was shown ...
- Use
- Smith (2003) showed....

Why Are Papers Rejected?

1. Poor writing style
2. Papers does not make a point
3. Methods flawed or poorly described.
4. Papers taken from speech or thesis without

modification

5. Too much literature/ not enough results.
6. Missing information or out of date references
7. Topic too narrow
8. Information old or out of date
9. No new information
10. Wrong journal (Journal of Professional Nursing-2002)

So, the foremost reasons for rejection of papers are due to poor writing style. This can be avoided by using better writing style or techniques.

How to Avoid Rejection

1. Before you start writing

- think...
- what is already known on this topic?
- What will this paper add?
- After you have written
- think...
- what does this paper add?

2. Writing a paper

- I. Organize the paper using headings and sub-headings
- II. Respond to feedback (From colleagues and editors)
- III. Be aware of the limitations of using the material of others.
- IV. Use clear and simple writing - **Use clear, simple writing**
 - Often the first word that comes to the mind is the right one.
 - Don't seek to use polysyllabic words
 - Don't use Jargon.
- .. it is the writer job to make the reader interested - no reader owes us a reading and that even in academic articles and chapters we must always talk primarily to the topic and only secondarily to other academic
- V. Be meticulous about reference (Peter Barry)

Better Writing Style

George Orwell's five rules for Effective writing

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do
3. Longer words don't make you sound intelligent unless used skillfully.
4. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
5. Words that don't contribute meaning to a passage dilute its power. Less is always better. Always.
6. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
Example
7. The man was bitten by the dog (passive)
8. The dog bit the man (active)
9. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you think of an everyday English

equivalent.

Other Points

- Hyphens: e.g. pre-operative or preoperative. Be consistent
- Capital letters: e.g. Nursing Care. Not necessary
- Apostrophe: e.g. it's don't, can't. Do not use!
- Question mark?: Try to avoid asking your reader questions
- Exclamation marks! No place in academic writing!!
- Do not be afraid to use the first person

For example:

'We hypothesized that' is better than 'it was hypothesized'
I recruited interviewees 'is better than 'the researcher recruited interviewees'

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