

FORMAL STRUCTURE OF DENTISTRY JOURNAL EDITORIALS

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Dentistry is now described as a well established professional discourse community [3, p.107]. Dentistry discourse is an institutional discourse, i.e. it contains “features which are attributed to institutional practice” [5, p.15]. It encompasses a whole assemblage of activities, practices, events, instruments and settings referring to oral health. Professionals who are working in dental field have common public goals which are to prevent and control oral and craniofacial diseases, conditions, and injuries, and improve access to preventive services and dental care. Nearly every scientific journal publishes editorials or other opinion articles that accompany research articles or other reports or that present views and perspectives of the editors of the journal related to a published article, current issue, or journal policy. In this article focus will be placed on highlighting the stylistic and rhetorical peculiarities of the editorial (*editor's pages, editorial, editor's desk, Ed's letter*), a genre of written academic discourse, which is underestimated in linguistic research and viewed by some authors as ‘academically peripheral texts’ because editorials do not introduce original research.

A total of 45 texts were selected from the three reputable international dental journals as “British Dental Journal” (BDJ), “Journal of American Dental Association” (JADA), “The American Journal of Cosmetic Surgery” (AJCS) for 2013 – 2017.

In accordance to M. Bakhtin, the description of any genre has at least three components: the thematic subject, the composition and the style [4, p.97]. There are three main purposes of editorials found out: the most prevalent and commonly shared by all three journals are commentaries on the most important article (or articles with unexpected findings) from the point of view of the author (seldom of editorial board viewpoint), or concise review on a topic of current interest (47%). These editorials provide perspective on how the articles of the current issues fit with other information on the same topic, include critiques of original research articles published in the same issue of the journals, or tough on different topics may appear in different sections of the same journal.

The results of the study show that then the journals demonstrate somewhat divergency. BDJ editorials present personal message from the editor to journal readers (42%). The editorial voice and personality appear prominently in their journals within the limits, which are allowed by the communicative purposes of this genre, i.e. to relatively large extent, but, on the other hand, is pent-up by norms of professional discourse community, e.g.: *‘Immediately after our national meeting, I am always awash with emotions: happiness to see my annual friends and colleagues from around the world and sadness that I cannot see them more frequently.’* (AJCS, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2015. P. 47).

Presenting material with strong first-person writing style contrasts with the more common first person plural usage in conventional academic writing. JADA

and AJCS editorials aim at drawing readers' attention to recent innovations or advances in the field (36%) or providing updated appraisal of some important topics that are regarded to be essential for readers of the journal and the community. JADA and AJCS editorials are usually written by experts in the topics reviewed.

Commentaries on non-scientific topics, e.g. education, economics, health policy, law or ethics make up the least share for all three journals (11% by BDJ and 17% by AJCS respectively). All editorials studied mainly represent the opinion of the authors that is similar to editorials published in newspapers or fashion magazines. Only when editors write about editorial policies they speak for the journal itself. Thus, dentistry journals editorials are a public type of opinion discourse.

Most BDJ editorials are signed by the individual authors, usually by the Editor-in-Chief, and they represent the opinions of the author alone; they do not represent the official views of the journal itself. In contrast with BDJ, JADA and AJCS more often invite the authoritative external experts in the field of dentistry to open the journal issue with so-called *guest editorials*, which can be co-authored (usually five to seven authors) in JADA. As the names of the authors for guest editorials are presumed to be well known to the audience, their institutional affiliations are omitted in BDJ and JADA, while their credentials are mentioned in all the journals examined. BDJ and AJCS editorials have photographs of the author as an illustration, JADA does not as its editorials are usually multi-authored papers.

The editorials are relatively short essays compared with original research articles or review articles: *'Most effective editorials are concise and detailed, authoritative and scholarly, and insightful and thought-provoking.'* [1].

BDJ editorials (the body only) are about 700 – 800 words, while those of AJCS and JADA can go over the conventional 1000 word limit. In cases when editorials touch on the most pressing topics for dentistry community, the number of words can double.

The titles of BDJ and AJCS editorials have short title that relates to the subject of the editorial, whereas JADA editorials usually have a heading of a title and subtitles, which are of explanatory character, give an idea of the theme or content of the article:

Preventing tooth loss with biannual dental visits and genetic testing

Does it work?

(JADA, 2015, Vol. 146(3). P.141)

Cosmetic Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery, Plastic Surgery

Are They Different? And Do They Make a Difference?

(AJCS, 2016, Vol. 33(1). P. 5)

The editorials' titles examined are rather to capture reader's attention than to inform about the subject matter. To this purpose, various stylistic devices involving interrogative sentences, exclamation, punchy titles, allusions,

modified proverbs, etc. are used. *Will someone explain please?; How long will implants last?; All of Us!; Believing is seeing.*

There is no common genre structure of the editorials studied. Their texts are broken into nine – eleven (BDJ) or twelve (JADA and ADCS) and more paragraphs. Logical framework for editorials that comment on the research articles or review on a topic of current interest usually includes an introductory paragraph that introduces the topic, describes the issue; a paragraph that presents the statement of the problem or problems covered by the articles, numerical data, statistics, which in JADA can be presented through the tables; discussion that contains the elements of critical argument supported by evidence, places the findings of the studies highlighted into the context with the other relevant research; comments on the clinical and health policy implications and discussion about next directions in the research. Key message in BDJ editorials are set off from the rest of the text graphically (in bold type and italicized). The concluding paragraph or closing sentences can end with evidence-based conclusions that give clear takeaway message for readers or carry a clear answer to the question posed in the opening paragraph. If there is no clear answer, the editorialist may suggest possible approach to better tackle the problem. Some editorials presented as emotional opinions in their final paragraph or sentence may contain suggestions, wishes, a thematic epilogue, and even calls.

Thus, editorial is a genre used to promote the dentistry journal's contents or to maintain relationship with readers, keeping them informed of the field developments, initiatives and policies. The literary style of the articles is far from being formal, it is kept as interesting and vivid as possible within the bounds of dentistry academic discourse. This genre shows a tendency to blur genre boundaries and actively imbibes some features typical for such genres as essay, letter, analytical articles, scientific review article, review, giving rise to an intense process of genre merging.

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