

UDC 811.111

## LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Kit N. V. / Kit H. B.

c.philos.s., as.prof./ к.филос.н., доцент

ORCID: 0000-0002-7934-9138

Odesa Military Academy,

Odesa, Fontanska Doroha, 10, 65039

**Abstract.** English academic discourse as the way of expressing a researcher's ideas is analyzed in the article. The attempt is made to study out the main linguistic features of formal register to communicate the results of research with appropriate academic language.

**Key words:** academic discourse, academic language, reporting verbs, evaluative adjectives.

**Introduction.**

Presenting and discussing the results of a research requires certain language competences in spoken and written forms. These competences implicate the understanding of the main features of academic discourse which determines the way of expressing the author's ideas.

Graduate and postgraduate students are often absorbed in scientific texts in their mother tongues as well as in foreign languages according to their specialties. Therefore, special attention is paid not only to learning a foreign language as such but also to linguistic means of communicating the substantial characteristics of the subject of scientific knowledge. "The subject content that students must acquire is only accessible through specialist forms of language and, in turn, it is this content which gives meaning to those forms" [1, p. 123].

Academic discourse includes strict rules of organization and structure of integral texts, formality, complexity, intelligibility, accuracy, concern for the audience, and responsibility for the claims. All these features affect the language used in order to communicate the results of research effectively.

**Main text.**

Taking into consideration the formality of academic language in academic discourse, appropriate academic vocabulary and grammar structures should contribute to a command of formal style and diminution of conversational features. As a rule, formal academic English avoids the following: contractions (*cannot* instead of *can't*),

short forms of the words (*examination* instead of *exam*), slang (*attractive* instead of *phat*), jargon (*students* instead of *public*), idioms (*the other aspect* instead of *the other side of the coin*), phrasal verbs (*to discover* instead of *to find out*), interjections (*oh, well, you see*), exaggerations (*rarely* instead of *never*), subjective expressions (*I feel, in my opinion*), inappropriate negative forms (*few/little* instead of *not many/much*), direct questions.

Academic discourse is characterized by an objective, rather than subjective, manner of presenting information. It is widely recommended to minimize the use of personal pronouns or feelings, in spite of the value of personal perspectives. Eric Hayot states that most pronouns in academic discourse are rhetorical and deictically thin [2, p. 184]. Factual evidence is emphasized over personal sentiments, thus maintaining impersonal style.

Another feature inherent in academic discourse is the avoidance of exaggeration that is overstating, dramatizing or overemphasizing an idea or some aspect. Not to be criticized for being inaccurate in their claims, authors may use modal verbs (*may, might, could*), adjectives and adverbs of probability (*probable, likely, certain; probably, definitely, presumably*), statements of shared knowledge and beliefs (*it is widely known*). Thus, the author does not sound opinionated and provides space for other points of view.

Verbs should be paid special attention to in academic discourse in order to describe the researcher's actions, to state facts, to report on the results of the research and to avoid misunderstanding of an academic text. Due to the fact that researchers cite academic sources, they should select appropriate reporting verbs. For example, the verbs *mention, claim, or argue* should be used with caution. The verbs *mention* and *say*, having an informal register, should be replaced with the verbs *describe, discuss* or *explain*. The verb *claim* can be replaced with the verbs *demonstrate* or *propose*. The verb *argue* is appropriate when showing a conflict of researchers' opinions, in other cases it should be replaced with the verbs *conclude* or *observe*.

The role of reporting verbs is more significant than it may seem. They are categorized differently by different researchers. But it should be noted that giving

information on the cited source they show the writer's attitude to the findings and influence the reader's interpretation of the data provided [3, p. 237]. Besides conveying the author's stance to the reader, clarity and precision should remain key features in effective communication of the author's ideas within academic discourse.

To reinforce clarity and precision as well as argumentation in academic writing, adjectives as evaluative words emphasize a writer's opinion, contribute to persuade the reader that the research is of interest and the results are valuable. Agnès Tutin comes to the conclusion that academic writing does not use overtly positive or negative judgement and authors prefer more subtle and less subjective evaluative adjectives that refer to time, novelty and importance [4]. The appropriate synonyms should be found for assessment in academic discourse. For example, *famous* (representative, law) should be replaced with *widely-known* (representative) or *principal* (law); *better* (accuracy, feature) replaced with *higher* (accuracy) or *more reliable* (feature).

The use of appropriate adverbs in academic discourse has several functions, namely: to state something explicitly (*evidently* or *noticeably* instead of *obviously*), to avoid exaggeration (*constantly* instead of *always*), to avoid a potential negative reaction from the reader (*in fact* or *indeed* instead of *actually*), no adverb with present simple and continuous tenses.

### **Summary and conclusions.**

Considering English academic discourse as the formal, factual and precise way of providing information on research we suppose that knowing its main linguistic features is significant for researchers to be able to discuss complex ideas in their fields of study. An objective manner of presenting information is ensured by minimization of the use of personal pronouns thus maintaining impersonal style. The formality of academic language is greatly maintained by vocabulary (verbs / reporting verbs, adjectives, adverbs) appropriate for academic discourse. All the features of academic discourse tend to minimize misunderstanding of academic texts and communicate the results of research effectively.

**References:**

1. Hyland, K. (2009) *Academic Discourse: English in a Global Context*. Continuum International Publishing Group. 215 p.
2. Hayot, E. (2014) *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*. Columbia University Press, New York. 246 p.
3. Demir, Y. & Al-Kadi, A. (2023) Toward a Critical Approach to Reporting Verbs in Academic Writing. *Turkish Studies – Language and Literature*, 18(1), 231-240. <https://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.64174>
4. Tutin A. (2010) Evaluative adjectives in academic writing in the humanities and social sciences. *Constructing Interpersonality: Multiple Perspectives on Written Academic Genres*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing. , pp. 219-242. {hal-02099149}

Sent: 19.05.2025

© Kit N. V.