

THE CORRECT WAY TO WRITE

All the languages, each one of them with its particular origins and evolution, have their own structures and singularities. Their rules are well defined and their use is modulated, adapted and consolidated in time. Generally associated to countries or individualized geographies, although equally existing in the different fields of activity, the languages reflect modes, traditions and customs of the peoples and communities that use them.

Science has its own language as well. Its main characteristics are precision, given by the use of univocal expressions, and conciseness resulting from its adequate and restricted usage. Said language should be utilized appropriately in the oral communication and, more so, in the written one. It does not refer to a different grammar to be used in writing scientific papers, but to a particular approach and style.

The structure of reports of research results and that of scientific articles follows a rather rigid pattern that has consolidated itself throughout time since the publication of the first scientific journals, more than three centuries ago. On the other hand, reviews and essays admit a larger flexibility in their structure, although not so in the use of the language.

In the first case the guidelines are clear. The title should be short but sufficient to point out to the reader what the work presented is about. The summary must be very short and clear, and indicate the reason of being of the work, how it was done, what was obtained, what it means and what it is good for. The introduction should not be an exhaustive review of the field but place the performed study in the right perspective. The methods ought to allow any reader to repeat the procedure used and the results should be concise and include only that which is relevant. The discussion, which is very important, must not repeat what has already been said but emphasize what is pertinent and place it in the context of

what is known. The figures and tables should be elaborated very carefully in order to show what is wanted and not be repetitive.

In the second case, that of review articles and essays, everything is more flexible. What becomes significant in them is the logics within the presentation, the clarity of the ideas and the relevance of what is being said. Here it is more important to guide the reader through a well defined sequence of facts or ideas and maintain his interest for what is going to be exposed later on.

Notwithstanding, beyond the adequate structure and the correct usage of the scientific jargon inasmuch as to the use of international units, conventions for quotes and references, use of italics, etc. is the grammar. Every text has to comply strictly with the grammatical writing rules that correspond. While these are learned in school, they are only consolidated and perfected through the sustained habit of reading and the abundant practice of writing.

At *Interciencia*, while the predominant and universal position of the English language in the mainstream of science is recognized, we have defended from the beginning the option that each author or group of authors consider his or their national language as the best means of communication. Whether this is due to the assessment of their own abilities or of those of the audience to whom an oral or written communication is addressed, the use by the researchers of their own language for the diffusion of their research or of science in general is entirely valid. In order to do it well it is indispensable to utilize a correct way to write.

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