

EDITORIALS IN DENTISTRY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS: BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC CONTEXTS?

Viktoriia Kostenko (Poltava)

Media have been recognized as an effective platform and channel to disseminate professional knowledge and thus, to promote communication and cooperation between scholars and professionals. Almost every issue of dentistry journals out of 400 registered by MEDLINE worldwide in 2016 is introduced with editorials. Editorials in professional and academic journals as a type of opinion journalism are underestimated in linguistic research and viewed by some authors as academically peripheral texts because they do not introduce original research. This study highlights some stylistic and rhetorical features typical of editorials published in reputable international dental journals as ‘British Dental Journal’ (BDJ), ‘Journal of American Dental Association’ (JADA), ‘The American Journal of Cosmetic Surgery’ (AJCS) for 2014 – 2017. The study is based on the analysis of 40 editorial articles.

Editorials aim at drawing readers' attention to recent innovations, advances or policy in dentistry, focusing on vital tasks of the field or tackling topics of interest to the journal's readers or editors, as well as to articles of ample scientific potential from the point of view of the Chief Editor or seldom of Editorial Board.

Most BDJ editorials are signed by the individual authors, while JADA and AJCS share more common practice to invite the authoritative external experts in dentistry to introduce the journal issue with so-called

guest editorials, which can be co-authored (usually from five to seven authors) in JADA. All the editorials present accentuated personal messages that can be comparable only with messages published in “Letters to the editor” and “Response sections” described as opinion articles both within scholarly genres and in media journalism.

The editorial voice and personality appear prominently within the limits outlined by the communicative purposes of this genre, i.e. to large extent, but, on the other hand, is pent-up by conventions of the professional rules and conventions. Strong first-person writing style typical of public journalism contrasts with the more common first person plural usage in conventional academic writing.

Emotional aspects of communication are known to imprint better and last longer, while rational communications are less likely to be absorbed and last only a short time [1]. Therefore, some editorials are interspersed with symbolic names, e.g.:

As Alice was travelling down the road, she met the Cheshire cat at a junction in that road and asked ...George Harrison of the Beatles summed up that conversation in the refrain of the song Any Road: “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.” Dentistry is in the midst of radical changes that have increased in scope and accelerated from an evolutionary to a revolutionary time frame during the end of the last century [2, p. 853].

This passage is a bright example of intertextuality that has been proven to be inherent for scholarly papers. Thus, the trend in using

cultural symbols typical of mass media is being observed to be applicable for dentistry journal editorials as well. Moreover, appeal to the iconic names, phrases, quotes of artwork possesses influential axiological potential.

There is no common genre structure of the editorials studied that bring them closer to media journal articles. In their writing style and rhetoric the editorials stand apart from scientific articles [3], but their content is typically evidence-based.

REFERENCES

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