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## **GRAMMAR ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE DISCOURSE IN DENTISTRY CASE REPORTS**

*Narrative elements play an important role in professional discourse, yet the narrative strategies within dentistry case reports have received limited attention. This study analyzes the narrative grammar markers in 40 clinical case reports from prominent dentistry journals to shed light on their pragmatic functions. Dentistry case reports employ verbs and verbal forms over noun phrases, facilitating a dynamic and engaging narrative style. The prevalent use of the past tense creates a chronological account of patient history and treatment progression, enhancing readability. Active voice, occasionally with first-person plural subjects, infuses a personal dimension into the narrative, further engaging readers. Additionally, the inclusion of direct and reported speech from patients bolsters credibility and evidentiality. Understanding these narrative grammar markers enriches the discourse of dental professionals, making their case reports more accessible and persuasive. This study unravels the distinctive narrative style of dentistry case reports, contributing to the efficacy of knowledge dissemination within the dental community.*

**Key words:** *narrative discourse, grammar tense, grammar aspect, grammar voice, direct speech, reported speech.*

*Хоча елементи наративної оповіді відіграють важливу роль у професійному дискурсі, вивчення наративних стратегій та наративних елементів у статтях – описах клінічних випадків у стоматології не отримало належної уваги з боку мовознавчої спільноти. У цьому дослідженні проаналізовані типи та функції граматичних маркерів наративного дискурсу в 40 статтях – описах клінічних випадків, відібраних з авторитетних фахових журналів. Виявлено, що найпоширенішими граматичними елементами дискурсу наративу є превалювання дієслів і дієслівних форм над номінативними конструкціями, що сприяє динамічному стилю викладу, вживання минулого часу створює хронологічний виклад історії хвороби пацієнта, активний стан та вживання прямої і непрямої мови.*

**Ключові слова:** *наративний дискурс, граматичний час, граматичний аспект, граматичний стан, пряма мова, непряма мова.*

Narrative plays a significant role in media, extending beyond the realms of fiction and documentary. It is a key element present and scrutinized in a diverse spectrum of genres, ranging from full-fledged fiction to providing the structure of an otherwise dry documentary [4, p.52]. Narrative is generally acknowledged as a discursive format [9; 10], historically favored for imparting information and conveying knowledge in more persuasive manner [10; 11]. However, a thorough examination of the existing literature reveals a notable lack of research concerning narrative strategies and techniques within the professional discourse, and dentistry discourse in particular.

Medical clinical report is a scientific scholarly writing that occupies an important position as it is considered essential for research growth [7]. With growing demand for evidence-based practice, it is a crucial skill for medical practitioners to

produce well-written case reports. The in-depth linguistic analysis of dentistry case reports, which are an integral genre of the professional communication, is not only of great applicability in terms to facilitate achieving clear communication through thoroughly selected terminology, grammar, formatting, and, thus, to lessen resistance in readers, but it also provides an insight into a complex set of cues that help to decode a particular situation model described in texts, as well as to highlight conventions within the socio-cultural context where the situation going on.

The purpose of this study is to reveal grammar markers of narrative discourse exploited in the texts of dentistry case reports (DCRs) and to analyze their pragmatic functions. The role of grammar in the clinical case reports has mainly been investigated within a paradigm of the structural conventions of this genre. The emphasis on functional grammar is significant because it focuses on the way language is put together so that meaning is communicated for particular purposes, and looks at a language as a system of meaning in different social situations [3, p.92].

This paper is methodologically qualitative and explanatory, aiming to highlight phenomena observed within texts and a specific context. The research material comprises a corpus of 40 clinical case reports obtained from ranked dentistry journals, such as *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, *British Dental Journal*, *Case Reports in Dentistry*, and *Journal of Dental Sciences* for 2018 – 2023. The selected text samples were scrutinized by applying grammatical analysis, elements of discourse analysis, narrative, and stylistic analyses.

Clinical case reports, as a genre, possess several distinct characteristics. These include conciseness and brevity, driven by the authors' communicative purpose to convey their new knowledge and experience to colleagues with quickly and precisely that is, to some extent, stands in contrast to the academic style commonly found in research and review articles [7]. For instance, clinical case reports often adopt a personal tone, drawing from the authors' own experiences, in order to provide a more relatable perspective; the narrative style in is also noteworthy, as it contributes to a more engaging and informative reading.

Our study has demonstrated that DCRs reveal certain grammatical features, which are unique to this genre and which textualize particular aspects of the clinical case report as a narrative. Specificity and complexity of the reference situations, as well as the communicative purposes of the genre that in dentistry typically aim at presenting a treatment method, laborating the diagnosis, describing the patient outcome, or describing a rare condition [8, p. 132], are implemented not only through the thorough selection of the appropriate vocabulary, but through the proper construction of phrases choosing grammar forms that reflect different types of eventuality and encode temporal information, temporal logic. P. J. Hopper claims that “in any utterance a particular importance is universally attached to the temporal contour of a state of action and the speakers’ attitude towards it”, which grammatical correlates are the categories of tense, aspect and modality [5, p.3]; G. Leech considers tense and aspect among the linguistic roots of pragmatics [6].

Unlike the language of most written scientific genres, for which nominalization and nominal groups are viewed as a universal means for denoting new knowledge, concepts, and ideas, thereby creating more complex expressions and providing higher information density [1; 3], the language of DCRs seems as less artificial and more dynamic due to employing more verbs and verbal forms, e.

*g.: After gingival retraction carried out using an impregnated cord (Figure 9) a final impression was taken using polyvinyl siloxane (Virtual, Ivoclar Vivadent) (Figure 10) and sent to the laboratory [12]. Whatever the donor site is (the fibula, scapula, rib, and the iliac crest), it is desirable to preserve the bone graft until full healing to make the final prosthetic whatever its types including implant-supported fixed prostheses, or removable dentures whether supported by implants or not [12]. The verbs in the sentences above serve as text-forming dominants in the organization of the information.*

The narrative manner in DCRs is represented by using past tenses, balanced relation between active and passive sentences, and personal pronouns associated with the narrative style of the text. DCRs as other clinical case reports, aim at presenting a detailed description of patient history, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes, therefore using past tense as temporal operator found as a prevalent tense form in this genre (making up 63.4% of all predicate forms analyzed) helps authors present these elements in a chronological order, making it easier for readers to follow the progression of the case, e.g.: *The patient had not noticed the mass until the dentist brought it to his attention* [12]. *Intraoral examination showed an obvious volume of soft tissue in the iliac graft region which had healed well* (Figure 5), *and all options were discussed with the patient's parents regarding their economic situation or expectations* [16].

Numerous grammar reports point out that the verbs in the perfect aspect are far less prevalent, ranging from 5% to 10% in conversation, fiction, news and academic compared to verbs in simple aspect [2, p.113]. Our findings have demonstrated that verbs in perfect aspect make up 11.5% share that is in line with the statement above.

Though there is a tendency for active verbs with first person pronoun subjects in the writing of the scientific articles [1; 7], the use of the passive has continued to be considered a significant resource to express objectivity and scientific impersonality [1]. Our analysis of all types of predicates, including nominative predicates and there + to be constructions, has shown that the sentences in the active voice (43.9%) somewhat fall behind the sentences in passive voice (50.8%). Active voice with a first person plural subject tends to be used when the authors wish to underline a personal contribution, while passive is used for established or standard procedures, e.g.: *We examined the metallic elements in the orthodontic device and in the removed plates and screws with an analyzer* [13]. *In response to this contradiction, we think that the tip of the screw for fixing the bone fragment was located in the bone marrow, with abundant blood flow, thus facilitating allergen*

*sensitization [16]. Sentences in the active voice have a strong and clear tone, move the narrative forward and therefore help to create more engaging content.*

One of the distinct features of narrative texts is the reporting of what was said. Reporting ideas or messages of other scientists resulted from the processes of categorization and secondary conceptualization of the content of the source text is an integral part of scientific research and scientific writing, when direct or indirect quoting is applied. What distinguishes the genre of clinical case report from other scientific genres is the focus not only on the research task and its solving, but on individuals involved, that can be expressed by reporting their direct or indirect speech: *A 19-year-old Caucasian healthy female presented for an orthodontic consultation with a chief complaint of “I don’t like the space between my front teeth and the size of my incisors [16]. The parents reported that when the child was returning from the school, he got hit by a motorcycle and fell on the ground. At the time of the injury, the child spat out many permanent and deciduous teeth of both the arches [15].* Reported speech in these cases operates as a marker of evidentiality and ‘objective’ reporting, and therefore it is used to enhance credibility and from the uttered words and the previous speaker.

In dentistry case reports, the prevalence of verbs and verbal forms over noun phrases, the consistent use of the past tense, a large proportion of active voice, and the inclusion of both direct and reported speech of patients collectively create a distinct narrative style, which enhances the readability of case reports.

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