

Day, R.A.: **Scientific English. A Guide for Scientists and Other Professionals.** 2nd Ed. - Oryx Press, Phoenix 1995. ISBN 0-89774-989-8. 148 pp., USD 15.95.

R.A. Day is known to authors and editors by his textbook "How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper" (for review see *Photosynthetica* 14: 457-458, 1980). Due to its readability, clear recommendations, and many jokes the book is often used in courses of scientific communication. The reviewed textbook of the same author certainly finds similar application. It has already been published in two editions (the first one in 1992).

R.A. Day wrote the book for both English-first-language and English-second-language (ESL) authors and editors. He clearly shows that some traditional rules of English may be violated. This agrees with the present trend to change scientific English into "plain, understandable English".

First three chapters of the book (on principles and style of scientific writing, and on beauty, universality, and responsible use of English) do not bring much interesting information (with the exception of correct use of the term Formalin, spelling out of numerals, and proper style for dates). Nevertheless, I recommend everybody to cautiously read all following chapters. Many rules of English are evaluated and examples of proper style are given there. Even ESL teachers of English may correct thus some errors they teach their pupils.

Chapters 4 to 10 are on various parts of speech: Chapter 4 deals with parallelism, agreement of subjects and verbs, split infinitives, double negatives, and errors in syntax. Most examples given here as well as in other chapters are humorous, they include well chosen mottoes and anecdotes. Chapter 5 deals with words, their choice, and use of metaphors. Chapter 6 is on various kinds of nouns and pronouns. Chapter 7 shows function and types of verbs, and principles of their nominalizations (changes into nouns), while chapter 8 deals with adjectives, adverbs, and articles (their choice is most difficult for ESL scientists). Chapter 9 explains the use of conjunctions, propositions, and interjections. Chapter 10 gives examples of proper and confusing prefixes and suffixes (hyphens should be used only to distinguish words formed using prefixes and suffixes from other words).

Chapters 11 to 19 are on proper writing style. Chapter 11 distinguishes kinds of phrases (prepositional, infinitive, participial, and gerund), and gives some wrong and right examples of these kinds. Chapter 12 explains independent and dependent clauses, and shows how and when to distinguish between "which" and "that". Chapter 13 is on kinds of sentences (questions, exclamations, declarative sentences, length of sentences). Chapter 14 is on the structure and length of paragraphs (each should tell a story). Chapter 15 teaches how to use voice (not passive), person (first preferred), and tense (present for established knowledge and presentation, past for description of methods and results, and for attribution). Chapter 16 gives very important recommendation for punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, apostrophes, parentheses, brackets, slashes, and hyphens). Some languages, such as Czech, do not use dashes, rarely use comma prior to *and* (= and), and have a reverse use of parentheses and brackets. Hence the respective ESL authors should check carefully these paragraphs ("commas...say "Slow down"). Chapter 17 warns of redundancies (double speech, useless words, oxymorons) and jargon (words and expressions to avoid, buzzwords = "modern" words, hackneyed expressions). Chapter 18 shows how and what to abbreviate. Special recent cases, like those dealing with minorities, sexism, marital status, sexual orientation, and medical insults, are topics of the last chapter.

Three appendices overview some of the principles and uses (1 - punctuation, 2 - problem words and expressions, 3 - words and expressions to avoid). A useful subject index is supplemented. Selected cartoons of Calvin and Hobbes, Peanuts, and B.C. are a welcome relaxation during reading the book. There are almost no misprints in the text. I do not know the difference between the first and second edition of the book, but the second one is certainly perfect. I fully recommend its reading to everybody who prepares scientific texts in English. As a supplement, the readers may learn some jokes to be presented at parties. I hope that reading the book lowered also the amount of errors in my English (check this book review, please)

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