

Expressional accentuations in quotes as applied in Czech scientific and theoretical texts

Keywords: style; theoretical and scientific text; the corpus of Czech written scientific monological communication; activation; differentiation.

Abstract

The paper explores the style of a selection of contemporary Czech scientific texts representing contemporary Czech scientific discourse, which comprises professional monological monographs written in Czech in the last decade. Through exploring a representative selection of texts, our research endeavoured to verify the occurrence or non-occurrence of linguistic concern which is deliberately used in contemporary Czech scientific discourse to interrupt (1) the emotional and stylistic neutrality and (2) the relative comprehensiveness, lucidity and clarity of the professional expression. Linguistic concern and stylistic activation in contemporary professional texts are in most cases signalled graphically, by quotation marks. The authors thus indicate to the recipient the occurrence of a stylistic marker, or generally dissimilarity of stylistic norms. Formal separation of the device from the text is an important dialogical means connecting the author and the recipient of scientific discourse. Most often it features simplifying terminology; (non)exact expression; complementarity; the vacillating or transient terminology in the field. The authors use quotation marks to signal graphically not only means that are contradictory to scientific style, such as professionalism; expressions meaning ‘so as to say’; imprecise, ambiguous and vague expressions (which in humanities and social sciences occur in the foundation text); but also means of expression conveying subjectivity and expressivity; sporadically metaphors. Humanities and social sciences even feature graphically signalled authorial detachment from the content; hyperbole; or possibly irony. The stylistic activity of the quoted means of expression consists in their manifest contextual stylistic value. Manifest activity of diverse linguistic means separated by quotation marks represent the most forceful way to activate the neutral presentation of present-day Czech professional texts. Their frequency and stylistic activity in all excerpted monographs in the defined groups of fields confirm the authorial ambition to achieve a more original diction of professional discourse. The graphical distinction from the foundation text proves the continuous respect for the stylistic norms of theoretically professional communication.

The paper focuses on the means for activating professional discourse, namely on enhancing the topicality of diverse linguistic devices by placing them in quotes. Even though inverted commas may fulfil manifold functions in the text, their significance in particular usage need not always be unambiguous. Therefore their use in specialized discourse is prevalently limited to literal quotations from other texts, on exact titles and terminology. Using quotes in other functions is rather scarce, in many cases reflecting distinctive usage in a particular field of science. Inverted commas in scientific discourse can also indicate vagueness, indefiniteness, subjectiveness, expressiveness, rarely even aesthetic aspects of an expression. It is here that expressions in quotes can allow for originality and individuality in the author’s professional style. Our aim is to produce acceptable evidence for (non)occurrence of expressional concern which purposefully breaks (1) relative completeness, perspicuity and explicitness as well as (2) stylistic emotional neutrality of contemporary scientific discourse, while being set off in quotes. This paper is thus intended to survey the processes that are currently taking hold in contemporary Czech theoretical discourse, that is to say the linguistic processes of interaction, individualisation, and metaphorisation in professional communication. In formulating the starting hypotheses, our study is grounded in the evolutionary alterations of scientific and technical expression towards a higher originality and individuality of expert style (Kraus 1994). These topical trends have repeatedly been described and justified by specialists in the field. (e.g. Čmejrková 1999; Krčmová 2008; Bartůňková, Zachová 1995).

Stylistically, the language of theoretical and scientific utterances comprises carefully formulated, relatively complete, exact and clear disquisitions delivered within public linguistic communication and marked by a prevalently conceptual constituent. The wording of a technical communication is stylised with suppressed emotionality, while innovative means of expression are instrumental in conveying scientific knowledge and its correlation more perspicuously. Lacking aesthetic ambition and persuasive function, academic style is rather bound to complete cognitive objectives. The fact that in professional

communication the choice of expressions is stylistically and emotionally neutral is correlative with the use of standard language necessitating literary vocabulary.¹ The variability and specificity of multiform human cognitive processes are naturally reflected in multiple professional discourse communicating information from various fields of human activity. This paper is focused on theoretical scientific style, adjusted to the presentation of new knowledge, precise and elaborate in form and content, and directed to an erudite recipient.

In order to achieve the intended targets, the research generated a textual corpus representing contemporary Czech scientific monological discourse. The anthology comprises team and authorial monographs which are thematically divided into five Czech Science Foundation (hereinafter GAČR) fields:

- 1) technical sciences;
- 2) sciences of inanimate nature;
- 3) medical and biological sciences;
- 4) social sciences and humanities;
- 5) agricultural and biological-environmental sciences.²

The term *contemporary scientific communication/contemporary scientific discourse* means restrictedly technical, monological monograph communication written in Czech roughly in the last decade. Our preferred choice were team monographs on account of presumably diminished influence of subjective stylistic factors. The differential point of view embracing ‘horizontal’ classification was adopted to enable us to compile a deliberately differentiated text sample which should prove or disprove long-standing assertions, accepted by lay and academic communities as one, that the observed targets of Czech-written scientific monological communications in particular fields are (can be) dissimilar and, further, that the most striking diffe-

¹ This description is based on the concept of professional style (Krčmová 2008, pp. 208–215).

² Particular monographs are further referred to by abbreviations mentioned in the bibliography.

rences can be expected between ‘sciences and humanities’; specifically, our study attempts to comprehend the process of linguistic differentiation between selected fields, namely, one of the factors affecting the dissimilar linguistic development of contemporary Czech scientific discourse and identified as a ‘professional’ determinant (Daneš 1997, p. 74). Since the process of differentiation is perceived today as one of the most distinct features of contemporary development of Czech technical style, our endeavour then is to render the process of (linguistic) differentiation, i.e. separation of more and more specialised fields (Kraus 1994, p. 15) within the corpus representing contemporary Czech academic discourse. The selected monographs include theoretical technical, or even scientific, texts but not popularising works. With the clear limits of a scientific text being difficult to fix, the expression *scientific* is used according to the GAČR classification of particular fields. The ambiguous terms (*technical*) *sciences*; *scientific (style)*; *scientific (communication/discourse/text)* etc. are reduced in the text if connected to the stylistic aspects of professional text and substituted by the terms of (*technical*) fields; *theoretical scientific (style)*; *theoretical scientific (communication/discourse/text)*.

In monographs representative of the present-day Czech written scientific discourse, the greatest incidence of graphically emphasised expressions in quotes was found in Czech and international technical terminology³. Terms in quotes occur in all fields of science, but the practice of using inverted commas in particular groups of fields varies.

³ The word term is understood here as an “appellation of a concept in the conceptual system of a specific scientific or technical field” (Martinová 2002, p. 488). In practice, however, it is difficult to define what is a term and what is not a term in individual fields. This study featured one-word as well as compound-word excerpts. Furthermore it discriminated between international terminology, including the terms derived from international stems, and Czech terminology. The fact that some terms have only the international version, or only the Czech version, or possibly the Czech version is obsolete, is not taken in consideration. Neither were analysed oscillations of international and Czech versions of the terms. The excerpting methodology was limited to practical, easy-to-objectivise, criteria – reference in specialised terminological dictionaries. A technical term was deemed faintly terminologised if it is not included in the specialised terminological dictionary when used

Mostly consistent is the graphical quoting of international and Czech terminology in technical fields with mathematics, while least conformity is found in medical and biological fields. In technical sciences, including mathematics, placing in quotes indicates Czech terminology, whereas parentheses mark international terminology. In sciences of inanimate nature, quotes signal both international and Czech terminology; Czech terms are discriminated by both inverted commas and parentheses, or solely by parentheses. In medical and biological monographs, inverted commas are used to indicate international terminology which may be also set off by parentheses, that is jointly with parentheses or without them. In humanities and social sciences, the practice is exactly the opposite, with quotes indicating Czech terminology. Both inverted commas and parentheses here introduce Czech equivalents of international terms, as well as quotations of common facts, phrases, things, phenomena or events. The quoted terminology actually does not enhance the originality and creativity of scientific style, rather, along with stimulating the recipient, it reinforces the authorial scientific diction. Foreign terminology can be indicated by a different type of font, mostly italics. A comparison of practices in individual fields reveals that specific graphical differentiation of international or Czech terminology has become fixed, yet only within a particular group of related fields.

Besides marking the international and Czech terminological quotations, the authors of the excerpted monographs use inverted commas to mark the words which point out simplistic, old or obsolete terminology, or possibly its oscillations (*v »zakázaném pásu« neuspořádaných polovodičů lze nalézt ještě jiné elektronové stavy*)⁴. Quotation marks are also used to highlight in the text non-scientific wording

across several fields. Beyond our attention remained the overlapping of terminology and phraseology because it is irrelevant to the purpose of this research.

⁴ The collocation *zakázaný pás* represents an interval of energies in whose, strictly speaking, ideal system cannot exist any states of energy. In that particular case, there are some, though not many. Using the term *zakázaný pás* then is not quite a correct appellation (namely it applies to amorphous semiconductors) that is set off graphically by inverted commas.

(*velmi často se zhotovují mikrodisky ve tvaru »hřibku«*); popularisation (*zřejmý potenciál naladění pro »zelené chování*); jargon (*fenomén »bílého pláště«*); phrasemes (*že takovému hybridní polyploidní komplexu, jež vznikají jako důsledek nahodilých hybridizačních událostí, jsou v některých případech skutečně »slepé vývojové uličky«*); periphrases of stock phrases (*označil »opoziční smlouvu« za skrytou tichou velkou koalici*). If the terminological appellation is substituted by a non-terminological appellation, it can hold a subjectivising marker (*jejich první setkání s nefrologem je až při akutním zahájení dialyzač- ní léčby při zjevné uremii /tzv. »pacient z ulice«/*, i.e. a patient not treated so far). In theoretical scientific communication, the stylistic and emotional neutrality of a technical expression can also be activated by technical jargon of a particular field, as an example of which can serve map titles in agricultural and biological environmental fields (*e.g. mapa »pěťadvacítka«*). *Implicative simplifying terminology, non-scientific wording or complementarity thus establish a meaningful dialogue between the author and the recipient. Admittedly, a simplifying or popularising expression can be attributed to lack of concrete technical appellation or to its informality.*⁵ If this is not the case, the graphical signal of inverted commas represents a deliberately chosen means of activation and motivation to make the scientific expression more comprehensible even to a less erudite recipient. Similarly, even non-terminological appellations placed in quotes become a useful means for stimulating the textual interactivity which reflects the author's cognisant attitude towards a delegated recipient through replacing emotionally neutral terminology by activating professionalisms, or by devices to render various degrees of certainty about the subject matter. Expressions signalled by inverted

⁵ For example, in a geological monograph, quotation marks accentuate 'informal' stratigraphical units, i.e. one-time stratigraphical, petrographical or paleontological terms which fail to observe generally adopted rules and codes of technical terminology. Geological and paleontological terminology is currently inconsistent and its codification according to various types of rules is put into practice very slowly. Inverted commas here signal foreign (above all German) terminology, suitable for border correlation, or possibly working, or popular, terms.

commas belong, just like inclusive plural (Krčmová 2008, p. 211) and questions, both in form and function (Schacherl 2017), to devices that give to prevalingly monological technical communication a hidden dialogic quality.

In addition, quotation marks used in the selected monographs also indicate imprecise, ambiguous or vague expressions, i.e. means that, put simply, go against the principles of scientific diction. Inverted commas signal here purposefully less precise appellation (»mírným« zvýšením sérového kreatininu). The recipient's attention is drawn to the fact that the appellation in quotes violates the norms of technical style. In scientific fields, including mathematics, and in the fields of inanimate nature, in medical and biological environmental fields, inverted commas are mostly used with expressions to describe relative values, such as measure and opinion adjectives (v teoreticky »ideálním« prostředí), often in the superlative (pokud existuje více »nejlepších« jedinců se stejnou fitness). Words expressing impreciseness, indefiniteness or approximation of the conveyed information are placed in quotes throughout the whole excerpted corpus of technical texts. In social sciences and humanities, means of expression to render impreciseness and indefiniteness are not graphically accentuated straight in the basic text, which can be indicative of a higher authorial tolerance to popularising or less precise diction in this type of scientific monographs.

Our excerpts also evidenced using quotation marks to convey subjectivity and expressiveness. The subjectivised authorial attitude and expressivity is delivered through accentuated appellations entering the terminological context of technical discourse under the tension resulting from a clash between a concrete appellation and a stylistically neutral scientific text. More often than not, the activated means of expression carries a telling stylistic marker (jde skutečně o hladkou křivku, z níž naměřené minimum »vykousla« silná absorpční čára; jeseteři a veslonosi jsou nejstarší dnes žijící skupinou paprskoploutvých ryb, jsou žijícími zkamenělinami, rybami, které doslova »zapomněly vymřít«). The graphic expression in quotes can, at the same time, be a literal translation of a foreign word or phrase, in the main, a loan translation from English (e.g. především nekontrolovanou »rozlezlou« ur-

banizací /urban sprawl/). Placed in inverted commas are, and in all researched fields, also devices meaning "as it were". The author chooses the activating expression, taking for granted that the recipient it will find unconventional. The authorial intention to break the stylistic and emotional neutrality of scientific discourse is manifested here, although the stylistic activity of the activated means is reduced by its graphical separation in quotation marks (e.g. mnozí si s čísly jen »hráli«).

Rare, though in all excerpted monographs, is the incidence of metaphorical expressions in quotes, mostly set metaphorical appellations or personifications (prales celkově »zestárl«, tzn., dožívají další jedinci či jejich skupiny a přitom stále nestačí dorůst nová generace, and the like). Lexicalised transfer of semantic similarity combines enhanced expressiveness with concretisation, which frequently features a contextual stylistic value (ledviny »pumpují« NaCl z turbulárního lumenu). The incidence of personification is recorded in all corpus monographs. Sporadic is the occurrence of similes in quotes, and in all fields, except sciences of inanimate nature. Invariably it is the right side of simile, comparatum, that is graphically set off, (tento oblak bývá někdy označován jako »kouřící hora«, protože se line od vrcholku hory a podobá se kouři proudícímu z komína). In social sciences and humanities, in agricultural and biological environmental fields, sporadically also in technical fields with mathematics, even sentence phrases can be placed in quotes (e.g. kdy obecně platilo: »Když se neurodilo na místním poli, urodilo se jistě někde jinde«; or lidé »viděli druhý břeh«). The dividing line between the accentuated expression the author deems necessary to detach from the basic text through inverted commas and the expression that is not yet contradictory to the norms of theoretical scientific style constitutes a degree of the authorial subjective deliberation and cannot be exactly determined. As an example can be given two collocations - učebnicový příklad used in the basic text (doslova učebnicovým příkladem tohoto jevu jsou bouře ukázané na obr.) and učebnicová forma which is placed in commas (v přírodě však tyto procesy probíhají v čisté »učebnicové« formě jenom málokdy). In the former, the metonymical link between a specific attribute and the basic noun is perceived by the author as lexicalised,

unimpaired the concreteness or exactness of the existing relation of similitude, in the latter, modification of the stem substantive is deemed more accentuated, probably requiring a higher level of the recipient's cognitive activity; unsurprisingly, in the same monograph, the same author does not hesitate to separate them graphically from the basic text.

In social sciences and humanities, expressions placed in inverted commas include also quotations or cloned clichés (*označil »opoziční smlouvu« za skrytou tichou velkou koalici*); non-verbal phrasemes (*jazyček na vahách*); lexicalised appellations of things and phenomena (*šedá zóna*). Expressions in quotes may deliver here an expressive stylistic marker (*které pod patronátem konkrétního šlechtice fungovaly jako samostatné »církečky« (farní obce)*), but, above all, they convey authorial irony (*Mnichovská dohoda, spíše však diktát, »upravila« československé hranice*); authorial indifference to the content (*v jakési »vynucené« toleranci*); sparsely even hyperbole (*o České republice již kolovaly vtipy, že je největší »nevládní organizací« Evropy*). As used in monographs produced in social sciences and humanities, figurative language, to a large extent metaphorical appellation, is the most frequent and stylistically most active device of the whole excerpted corpus (*paralela s jiným »upečeným«; k zahájení reformy bylo zapotřebí také odvahy ke »skoku do tmy«; stal se »chodícím billboardem, který naláká voliče«; pro mladší a vzdělanější voliče byly často postmateriální hodnoty důležitější než »tlustá peněženka«, kterou slibovala ODS*). The inverted commas in the monograph *Politický systém České republiky: Historie a současnost* (4TEXT1) accentuate even figurative appellations developed into sentences (e.g. *stal se »chodícím billboardem, který naláká voliče«*). Exceptionally, the fields of social sciences and humanities place in inverted commas complete quotations, or possibly commonplaces which are set in activated semantic contexts (*bylo možno cumgranosalis (»se zrnkem soli« – s drobnou nadsázkou) mluvit; představovala (vertikální subordinální linie) nervus rerum /»nerv věci«/ státní správy; neblahé důsledky v podobě politické nestability a extrémně vysoké nezaměstnanosti postihly bezprostředně po rozdělení zejména menší z obou*

»siamských dvojčat«, Slovenskou republiku). Quotations, regardless of whether translated or written in Czech, serve here not only to refine the wording, but they also offer an indisputably decorative element, concurrently accentuating the authorial stylistic originality and activating the recipient. In monographs written in the field of social sciences and humanities, diverse lexemes, including professionalisms; subjectivised authorial appraisals; allusions; irony or quotations represent stylistically efficient means to add more expression and colour to the author's technical communication.

The observed purpose in the corpus of present-day Czech written technical discourse is typified by manifest constancy which is reflected in the recurrent use of graphically accentuated vocabulary. In technical fields, particularly in the monograph *Kouzlo čísel. Od velkých objevů k aplikacím* (1TEXT1), the graphical division of the text by inverted commas is only used as a means of activating technical expression. In the other delimited scientific fields, expressions in quotes fulfil also different functions. In medical and biological monographs and in those produced in the sciences of inanimate nature can be recorded certain inconsistency in purposeful application of inverted commas to detach expressions from the text. It is signalled by the occurrence of identical appellations in the same function both in quotation marks and in the basic text. In social sciences and humanities, purposeful stylistic accentuation of expressions used in theoretical technical texts can appear despite the fact that the devices for rendering impreciseness and indefiniteness are part of the basic text, unseparated from it graphically. In contrast to the other fields, monographs produced in social sciences and humanities use inverted commas to activate also allusions; authorial detachment; irony; or hyperbole.

Accentuations of diverse linguistic devices represent the most frequent stylistic activation in present-day Czech written scientific texts. Serving as an effective means of communication between the author and the recipient of a technical text, they can be found in all excerpted monographs produced in the defined fields. In view of the monological character of technical discourse, accentuated expressions set off from the basic text by inverted commas belong to devices that contri-

bute to potent inner dialogic quality of technical communication. The graphical signal of quotation marks in most cases serves to draw the recipient's attention to simplified terminology; non-scientific wording; complementarity; to oscillating or inconsistent specialised terminology, in general, to variance from the stylistic norms of technical communication. Further, inverted commas are used in scientific discourse to highlight vague and indefinite expressions; professionalisms or inconsistent terminology in the field; expressions meaning "as it were"; means for expressing subjectiveness or expressiveness; rarely also delivering aesthetic function. Nothing like the "so called" phrase, which was not the subject of our research for it does not fulfil the examined activational functions, though it can be found in contemporary Czech written scientific discourse. In social sciences and humanities, inverted commas also accentuate figurative appellations; authorial indifference to the scientific content; scarcely signalling hyperbole, or possibly even irony. Accentuations of diverse linguistic devices through quotation marks represent an effective mode of neutral delivery of contemporary Czech technical texts. Their frequency and stylistic activity in all excerpted monographs in the defined fields corroborate the authorial intentions of introducing more originally stylised scientific diction, while their graphical differentiation from the basic text evidences the enduring authorial respect for the stylistic norms of theoretical scientific communication.

Our analyses of the selected segment of technical expression in the corpus of contemporary Czech written scientific communication did not corroborate noticeable linguistic differences among individual fields. Monographs representative of particular fields may have shown certain differences in selected aspects, yet no major distinctions. More obvious disproportions were documented between social sciences and humanities on the one hand, and the remaining fields on the other, i.e. in the anticipated opposition of 'humanities' and 'sciences'. The proposed processes of interaction; individualisation; and metaphorisation of scientific discourse were corroborated for a selected device only in monographs produced in social sciences and humanities, partially also in agricultural and biological environmental fields. Monographs pro-

duced in the related fields fully use the selected expressions in inverted commas to convey synonymity; terminological variability; figurative phraseology; and similarity. The primary cognitive function of scientific discourse, such as enabling better understanding of the delivered issues, is in social sciences and humanities complemented by cultivated language, allowing for higher and, above all, more original and stylistic ambition. As a result, scientific discourse here is more personal and emotional than in the other selected fields. Thus what makes social sciences and humanities different from other fields is a higher stylistic ambition in delivering the scientific content as well as greater acceptance of the recipient.

Sources

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