

## АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЕ ПИСЬМО / ACADEMIC WRITING

Редакция журнала «Интеграция образования» анонсирует о включении в контент журнала новой секции, посвященной академическому письму. Эта секция призвана способствовать интеграции системы академической коммуникации, предлагая площадку для анализа и обсуждения как теоретических, так и прикладных аспектов создания научных и образовательных текстов.

Основной задачей новой секции является стимулирование междисциплинарного взаимодействия и обогащение понимания структурных и функциональных аспектов академических текстов. Такой подход нацелен на повышение индекса читабельности и однозначности интерпретации научной информации, что критически важно для академического сообщества.

Приглашаем читателей и авторов журнала активно участвовать в этой инициативе, которая поможет поддерживать высокие стандарты академической честности и инновационности в процессе академической коммуникации.

Научный редактор Е. В. Тихонова

The Editorial Board of the Integration of Education is proud to announce the addition of a new section dedicated to academic writing to the journal's content. This section aims to facilitate the integration of the academic communication system by offering a platform for analyzing and discussing both theoretical and applied aspects of scholarly and academic texts creation.

The new section's main objective is to stimulate interdisciplinary interaction and to enrich the understanding of the structural and functional aspects of academic texts. This approach seeks to enhance the readability index and unambiguity of scientific information interpretation, which is critical for the academic community.

We invite readers and authors of the journal to actively participate in this initiative, which will help to maintain high standards of academic integrity and innovation in the process of academic communication.

Science editor E. V. Tikhonova



Оригинальная статья / Original article

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### Ineffective Strategies in Scientific Communication: Textual Wordiness vs. Clarity of Thought in Thesis Conclusion Section

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#### Abstract

**Introduction.** The issue of lexical redundancy in academic writing remains crucial. Research based on Russian-language corpora is vital for the development of effective targeted academic writing courses that meet the unique needs of universities. This paper aims to identify factors through examples of wordiness in the Conclusion sections of theses to alter the design of courses broadening academic writing skills to fight against textual redundancy at various educational levels.

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**Materials and Methods.** A corpus of 72 theses across three educational levels (Bachelor's, Master's, and Candidate degrees) was analyzed. We selected theses from the repositories of the HSE University and Moscow City University. We focused on Conclusion section due to its highest level of conciseness: textual redundancy critically impacts its effectiveness. The analysis included a comprehensive procedure of raw data extraction, coding, conceptualization during iterative discussions, and classification according to Brohaugh's taxonomy.

**Results.** "Invisible" type of wordiness is a prevalent issue in academic writing across all levels of education. Such types as "overkill", "weak-kneed" and "empty" occur more frequently in research in Master's and Candidate's theses. The need to comprehend the reasons behind the use of different types of wordiness and their impact on readability is stressed. Candidate's theses are wordier despite the expectation of a higher level of academic writing skills at this level.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** The study highlights the systemic role of academic writing courses at all educational levels in reducing text wordiness. Despite our expectations of advanced writing skills in Candidate's theses, their high level of wordiness indicates the need for developing effective academic writing strategies. It is crucial to implement a personalized approach to academic writing instruction, considering the specific needs and challenges of each educational level, to create more concise academic texts. The paper provides insights into approaches to designing academic writing courses.

*Keywords:* wordiness in academic writing, wordiness taxonomy, Brohaugh's taxonomy, wordiness in thesis Conclusion section, academic writing, academic culture

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## Неэффективные стратегии научной коммуникации: водность текста vs четкость изложения информации в секции «Заключение» диссертационных исследований

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### Аннотация

**Введение.** Проблема избыточности использования лексических единиц в академическом письме остается крайне острой. Исследования, реализованные на основе русскоязычного корпуса, критически важны для создания эффективных целевых курсов по академическому письму, соответствующих уникальным потребностям и специализациям университетов. Цель исследования – выявить на основе примеров водности текста в секциях «Заключение» выпускных квалификационных работ и диссертаций факторы, учет которых качественным образом изменит конструирование курсов по развитию навыков академического письма, позволяя эффективно бороться с избыточностью текста на разных уровнях образования.

**Материалы и методы.** Анализируется корпус из 72 выпускных квалификационных работ и диссертаций на трех уровнях образования (бакалавриат, магистратура и аспирантура). Рукописи были подобраны в репозиториях Национального исследовательского университета «Высшая школа экономики» и Московского городского педагогического университета. Анализовалась секция «Заключение» как наиболее лаконичная: водность текста критично влияет на ее эффективность. Анализ включал в себя комплексную процедуру извлечения сырых данных, кодирования, концептуализации в процессе итеративных обсуждений и классификации в соответствии с таксономией Брото.

**Результаты исследования.** «Невидимая водность» является общей проблемой академического письма на всех уровнях образования. Более специфические формы водности – «избыточность» и «приукрашивание» – чаще встречаются в исследованиях на второй и третьей ступенях образования (магистерские и док-

торские диссертации). Статья подчеркивает необходимость более глубокого понимания причин использования различных типов водности и их влияния на индекс читабельности и понимание текста. Водность текста оказалась более распространенной в диссертациях кандидатов наук, несмотря на ожидание более высокого уровня навыков академического письма на эти ступени образования.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** В исследовании подчеркивается системная роль курсов академического письма на всех уровнях образования в снижении многословности текста. Высокий уровень многословия на разных ступенях образования указывает на необходимость разработки эффективных стратегий академического письма. Необходим индивидуализированный подход к обучению академическому письму с учетом конкретных потребностей и задач каждого уровня образования в контексте конкретного университета. Рекомендации и факторы, представленные в тексте, могут послужить основой для разработки курсов академического письма.

*Ключевые слова:* водность в академическом письме, таксономия типов водности, таксономия Брехо, водность в тексте секции «Заключение», академическое письмо, академическая культура

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### Introduction

*Academic Culture.* Conceptually, academic culture is considered to be a complex phenomenon comprising organizational, learning and research cultures [1]. Academic culture is not only the base for quality teaching and education delivery [2], it also encompasses the process of scientific development and performance [3] closely consider the development of academic informatics, academic management, academic mobility, academic literacy and writing<sup>1</sup>. All these components of academic culture seem to be inseparable from the concept of continuous academic development [4] that is among the core principles of lifelong learning. This requires the organizational culture of the university to constantly center academic culture as a metaculture being an ideal example that accumulates the best practices of effective academic communication at the global level.

Learning culture focuses on the development of basic knowledge and skills crucial for acquiring higher education, academic literacy being in the spotlight. Writing a scientific text that can be read and fully comprehended is a demanding task for researchers, no matter whether they utilize a native or foreign language for their writing [5]. Moreover, concise writing helps scholars communicate succinctly and enhance readability of their texts [6]. Readability is viewed as a capacity

of the target audience to grasp the scope of the text [7; 8]. In addition, it shows some respect to the readers allowing them to spend less time on reading and avoid misinterpretation, and, what is more, promotes the dissemination of science [9]. The notion of readability has been debated by scholars for years, nevertheless, they agree that readability index correlates with the quality of the text [10–12]. Moreover, the advancement of scholarly communication and the emergence of new techniques can boost readability and equip the reader with hyperlinks, audio and visual supplements to the research articles allowing the authors to communicate their ideas better.

*Academic Writing.* The written text being the key means of communication plays a pivotal role within academic culture. Writing appears to be inseparable from the academic life of students and researchers and serves as a tool for exploring new concepts and ideas, developing their ability and skills in producing objective academic texts as a part of their research activity [13]. The assumption that English is a global language of science and technology [9; 14; 15], yielded a plethora of studies revealing the problems that both students and professors face while studying the principles of academic writing in English [16–18]. Furthermore, Nasiri posits that due to lack of training and knowledge on academic writing, many researchers from

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non-English speaking backgrounds do not understand the expectations and requirements with regard to their written materials [14]. Moreover, Non-Anglophone writers are often blamed for their inability to communicate their ideas well and make them comprehensible because they do not follow the established standards of academic writing in English. However, this inefficiency in writing in a foreign language can be attributed to the lack of writing skills in their native language as well [19].

The education systems of each country are associated with certain cultural differences that affect academic thinking and writing traditions. As discourse patterns differ considerably from each other in various cultures, these differences in writing styles, academic thinking and presentation provide the scholars with a perception of why the academic text has been organized and written in a particular way [20]. In this light, to achieve greater results the instructors should establish best practices of academic writing in their native language taking into account the achievements of academic writing in English.

Academic writing is a complex skill that requires extended time to develop. Given that modern communication generally leans towards the standards of written communication, with its emphasis on brevity and compactness, the standards of academic writing are becoming more effective not only in the academic realm [13] but also in professional communication [21]. Today, academic writing is far from being synonymous with scholarly communication; it is a powerful tool for transparent, rhetorically conditioned, and linguistically precise communication, allowing for maximum communicative effect at minimal expense [15; 22]. However, this requires not just familiarity with the tools and tactics of academic writing in both native and English languages but also genuine mastery of them, which is impossible without practice [18]. In other words, a rational understanding of the importance of academic writing is not equivalent to the ability to represent it in practice. Workshops can improve individual academic writing to some extent, but without targeted extended academic writing courses, achieving genuine efficiency is impossible [21; 23].

*Wordiness.* The architecture of academic writing constitutes a complex conglomerate of components, including text structure, rhetoric and grammar, and wordiness. Wordiness in its different forms appears to be one of the most challenging features. Academic writing manuals promote the idea of succinct, lucid and readable academic texts. They claim that taking more words than necessary hinders the writers in their effort to convey information. Consequently, the strength of the texts is in their clarity and precision. Summing up the previous research on the issue, Śleszyńska claims that verbose writing can be provoked by some inconsistencies at the lexical level, for instance, by tautology or pleonasm, unnecessary repetition of the words related in their meanings, thus leading not only to wordiness but also errors [9]. In academic writing, these wordy phrases can be used to raise the level of sophistication. Moreover, researchers tend to use them overly, not realizing that they cloud their text and make it boring and pretentious [24].

Besides, excessive writing can impede the work of search engines by shifting the focus on unimportant issues and distracting attention from essential ones, thus depriving the research of appearing in search queries, receiving more views, downloads and citations [25]. Demir revealed that Introductions of research papers written by Turkish authors tend to use unnecessarily long phrases and sentences [24]. Also, he proposed a taxonomy composed of eight categories. Another classification of wordiness was proposed by Brohaugh [26] in his seminal work on how to write with precision. Every [27], in her turn, provided tips for tackling wordiness in research in medicine and science. However, most of the research concerns the cases of wordiness in texts written in English by non-native speakers [9; 24]. But still, the research on wordiness in non-English texts is scarce.

This study is aimed at identifying the cases of wordiness according to the classification provided by Brohaugh [26] to get insight into inefficient strategies of academic writing for the development of steps crucial for coping with them. We hypothesize that if an educational institution provides special

courses on developing competence in academic writing at each level of education, post-graduates should display the highest level of it.

### Materials and Methods

*Background.* Textual Wordiness Taxonomy. Wordiness as a concept encompasses various classifications [1; 24; 28], distinguishing different types that, despite being named differently, share similar meanings and contents. For our study, we adopted Brohaugh's [26] typology, which identifies 16 types of wordiness, making it the most exhaustive and informative classification due to its detail and comprehensiveness.

*Corpus Characteristics.* Our research corpus comprises three groups of theses, aligning with the hypothesis that academic literacy improves as students progress through different educational levels. The universities selected for theses analysis, HSE University (HSE) and Moscow City University (MCU), emphasize developing academic writing skills through specialized courses, workshops, seminars, and electives. Comparing theses across educational levels allows us to assess the efficiency of strategies to overcome textual wordiness employed within these courses.

*Conclusion Section in Theses: Function and Manifestation.* The Conclusion section was chosen for analysis due to its requirement for maximal analytical clarity and conciseness. If the author of the thesis is not adequately acquainted with academic writing strategies, this section typically reveals inefficient information presentation most clearly.

From the perspective of rhetorical steps taken to construct an effective Conclusion, it is crucial to understand the functions this section aims to serve. The focus is on the author's ability to demonstrate how successfully the research aim was achieved, whether the results were expected or unexpected, and where and how the obtained results can be applied. Often, research limitations and potential future research directions are also discussed in this section. It is essential not to repeat the Results section, not to comment on the obtained results, but to focus on defining the real significance of the obtained results and the possibilities for their practical application. This approach also requires maximum attention to every

word used, enabling the author to verbalize their intentions clearly and unambiguously. In this context, wordiness is a tactic that directly contradicts the author's intentions.

*Corpus.* To examine wordiness and academic writing skills, we constructed a corpus comprising 72 theses. For comparability, balance, and representativeness, this corpus was divided into three sub-corpora according to educational level (Bachelor's, Master's, and Candidate's degrees), ensuring consistency of data. The theses were selected based on disciplinary fields, authors' backgrounds, availability, and the inclusion of a Conclusion section as an independent structural component. Following these criteria, 24 theses were chosen for each sub-corpus.

*Procedure and Instruments.* Initially, theses meeting the analysis criteria were selected from repositories. Subsequently, a table for raw data extraction was created, coding each source as B1-24 for Bachelor's theses, M1-24 for Master's, and C1-24 for Candidate's theses. The table included columns for the source code and each of Brohaugh's 16 wordiness types, with an additional column dedicated to anomalies, anticipating encounters with wordiness examples that could not be classified according to Brohaugh's typology.

During the analysis, each author independently examined the Conclusion sections of the included dissertations, focusing on rhetorical structure presence, functionality of each rhetorical step, section length (characters without spaces), and instances of wordiness. The presence of specific rhetorical steps was tracked, and each clearly identified step in a Conclusion section was scored up to 1 point, with a maximum efficiency score of 5 for rhetorical structure and functionality.

Subsequently, authors presented their tables of raw data for iterative discussion to ensure unity in understanding each case of wordiness, the presence and functionality of rhetorical steps, and the Conclusion section's ability to fulfill its function and rhetorical manifestation.

In the final stage, all examples of text wordiness unanimously approved by the authors were classified according to the chosen typology.

*Data Analysis.* All instances of wordiness were distributed among the 16 types, with each case discussed by all three authors. In cases of

disagreement, a peer reviewer was consulted to achieve consensus. This iterative process was also applied to discuss the rhetorical structure of each Results section, with the author team individually identifying structural steps in each Conclusion section before clarifying and unanimously rating the rhetorical steps, their functionality, and overall assessment during discussions. External peer reviewers were involved in case of disagreements.

### Results

*Types of Wordiness Identified within the Corpus.* We collected 643 examples of wordiness, 181 of which were found in Bachelor's Theses, 205 cases in Master's and 257 in Candidate's Theses. The biggest number of wordiness cases was found in Candidate's Theses, whereas wordiness in Bachelor's and Master's Theses is almost the same (Figure).



Figure. Each Sub-corpus Share in the Corpus  
Source: Compiled by the authors.

The analysis of cases of wordiness in the context of a thesis, characteristic of different levels of education, allowed us to note the prevalence of the invisible, the weak-kneed and the empty types of wordiness in Bachelor's Theses; the invisible, the overkill and the weak-kneed types of wordiness in Master's Theses; the invisible, the empty, the overkill types of wordiness in Candidate's Theses (Table 1).

By comparing the most frequently occurring wordiness types in 3 sub-corpora, we

concluded that the invisible, the overkill and the empty types of wordiness were the most common. Examples of the following wordiness types were found in sub-corpora as singular cases or not found at all: the weak, the affected, the circuitous and the clever (Table 1). This means these problems of wordiness in academic writing are not common.

To illustrate the applicability of W. Brohaugh's taxonomy [1] for classifying types of wordiness in scientific discourse, examples were identified in the corpus of analyzed theses (Table 2).

*Types of Wordiness: Frequency of Occurrence in Sub-corpora.* Among 643 cases of wordiness 352 (~55%) were detected in the theses of MCU and 291 (~45%) examples were found in the HSE theses (Table 3) that shows 10% difference in wordiness frequency in the HSE and the MCU Theses.

*Bachelor's Theses.* We collected 181 instances of wordiness within a subset of Bachelor's Theses, aligning with Brohaugh's [26] categorization into 9 types of wordiness. The most frequent types were the invisible and the weak-kneed. Notably, nearly a third of these instances (61) were classified as invisible and, consequently, deemed unnecessary. Additionally, the distribution of the weak-kneed wordiness instances varied significantly: theses from HSE University exhibited almost half as many cases of this wordiness type (8) compared to Moscow City University (17) (Appendices 2, 3, 4)<sup>2</sup>. The most typical examples of wordiness cases are presented below.

The Invisible Type of Wordiness in Bachelor's Theses. There are 61 instances of invisible wordiness, with 34 examples sourced from HSE University Theses and 27 from Moscow City University. The identified examples show the tendency of Bachelors to overload the conclusions of their theses with cliches and standardized phrases thus conveying lack of originality: "Изучение литературы, анализ и обобщение собранных по проблеме материалов дали нам возможность определить теоретические основы использования игровых технологий для развития интересов младших школьников" (B7, HSE); "Таким образом, проведя теоретический анализ литературы и эмпирическое исследование, нами была

<sup>2</sup> Appendices 1–4 [Electronic resource]. <https://doi.org/10.15507/1991-9468.115.028.202402.254>

достигнута цель, решены поставленные задачи и подтверждена выдвинутая гипотеза” (B9, HSE); “Анализ теоретического исследования в совокупности с результатами опытно-экспериментальной работы позволяют сделать вывод, что гипотеза

подтверждена, поставленные задачи выполнены, цель исследования достигнута, иными словами, работа выполнена в полном объеме” (B24, MCU); “В процессе исследования были решены задачи, определенные на первых этапах” (B23, MCU).

Table 1. Cases of Wordiness

Type	Bachelor’s Theses	Master’s Theses	Candidate Theses	Total
The redundant	18	19	28	65
The already understood	11	8	14	33
The empty	20	20	49	89
The evasive (intentional or otherwise)	0	9	7	16
The weak-kneed and the passive	25	30	9	64
The weak, the noncommittal and the hesitant	0	1	2	3
The affected	0	1	2	3
The circuitous	0	0	3	3
The self-indulgent	9	8	14	31
The overkill	19	40	66	125
The inflated and the deflated	9	14	7	30
The invisible and therefore unnecessary	61	50	45	156
The imprecise	0	3	2	5
The clever and the show-offy	0	0	3	3
The nonsensical	0	2	2	4
The beautiful	9	0	4	13

Source: Hereinafter in this article all tables were drawn up by the authors.

Table 2. Wordiness Taxonomy by W. Brohaugh

1	Type	Definition	Example
1	2	3	4
1	The redundant	superfluous repetition, especially repetition of items on a page	<i>базовые основы, планы на будущее, взаимное сотрудничество, текущий статус, окончательный результат</i>
2	The already understood	repetition happens between writing and reading: when what’s in the reader’s head repeats what’s on the page	Педагог-психолог проводил оценку, включая <i>психологические тесты, для оценки способностей студентов...</i> Такой инструмент оценивания, как <i>критерии</i> , предлагает набор признаков для принятия решения об оценке активности студента... Образовательная <i>теория</i> , основанная на представлении закономерностей процессов обучения, предполагает...
3	The empty	words, phrases and sentences which include empty modifiers, introductions, transitions and connections, summation, reaction (meaningless words of response, repetitions and questions) and comments	<i>В основном, исследование предполагает, что... Более или менее, результаты демонстрируют... В целом, студенты склонны... Неизбежно, существуют ограничения исследования... В действительности, нет определенного ответа на... В большинстве случаев участники согласились, что... Как ни странно, результаты показали...</i>



1	2	3	4
4	The evasive	qualifiers, expressions of regret and hesitant rambling, indirect language and evasive terms, aesthetic avoidance and filler words	<i>Можно утверждать, что</i> результаты указывают на... <i>Похоже, что наблюдается тенденция к...</i> <i>Стоит рассмотреть идею, что...</i> <i>Не исключено, что...</i>
5	The weak-kneed and the passive	empty (weak) constructions that can be replaced by a verb with the same meaning	<i>Мы пришли к заключению, что...</i> <i>Мы выполнили анализ...</i>
6	The weak, the noncommittal and the hesitant	lexical choices that serve to defer forthcoming discourse or imply an anticipation of unfavorable content	<i>Возможно, стоит исследовать</i> альтернативные методы для повышения вовлеченности студентов... <i>Вероятнее всего, стоит обратить внимание</i> на значение результатов для образовательной политики... <i>Скорее всего, пришло время переоценить роль</i> стандартизированных тестов в образовании...
7	The affected	euphemistic writing and pretension	<i>Я общался с группой из семи обучающихся...</i> <i>Мы исследовали спектр нескольких конкретных элементов...</i>
8	The circuitous	the absence of a clear presentation of information, deviating from the appropriate sequence relevant to the subject matter (winding and twisting sentences)	<i>Результат остается неизменным по сравнению с его предыдущим состоянием...</i> <i>Обстоятельства не сильно отличались от своего первоначального состояния...</i> <i>Сценарий остается таким же, как и был ранее...</i>
9	The self-indulgent	the use of first-person narration contributes to an increased length of the manuscript and introduces an additional “character” for the reader to follow	<i>Я считаю, что</i> результаты подчеркивают важность взаимодействия учителя и студента... <i>С моей точки зрения, данные указывают на</i> необходимость реформы учебных планов... <i>Я убежден, что</i> интеграция технологий оказывает трансформационное влияние на результаты обучения...
10	The overkill	excessive argumentation, redundancy in verbiage and concepts, or excessive repetition thereof diminishes credibility and steers the audience away from the desired conclusion posited by the author	Следует обратить внимание на то, что студенты <i>должны строго соблюдать</i> политику академической честности, <i>чтобы избежать серьезных последствий...</i> Необходимо учитывать, что <i>эффективные навыки</i> коммуникации являются <i>необходимыми для развития позитивных отношений</i> между учителями и студентами... Нужно отметить, что <i>несоблюдение протоколов безопасности</i> во время лабораторных экспериментов <i>может привести к серьезным несчастным случаям...</i>
11	The inflated and the deflated	sentence, paragraph, and manuscript inflation arise from the absorption of extraneous material, leading to the elongation of the text	<i>Мы будем использовать приемы, основанные на приведенных ранее доказательствах,</i> при выборе учебных решений... <i>Применение дифференцированного обучения позволит удовлетворить разнообразные образовательные потребности...</i> Наша цель – дать студентам возможность <i>овладеть навыками критического мышления, необходимыми для всей жизни...</i>
12	The invisible and therefore unnecessary	recognizable terms, so ingrained that they lose distinction: clichés, fused adjective-noun combinations, conventional phrases, and overused word pairings	Полученные результаты свидетельствуют, что студентам <i>необходимо мыслить нестандартно,</i> чтобы <i>добиться успеха в учебе...</i> Педагоги часто подчеркивают <i>важность обучения к тесту для повышения результатов стандартизированных тестов...</i> <i>Эксперимент, который мы провели</i> на прошлой неделе...



Окончание табл. 2 / End of table 2

1	2	3	4
13	The imprecise	an empty, space-filling cliché or a jury-rigged series of words	Анализ данных представляет <i>подобную лабиринту архитектуру</i> обучения... Исследование <i>освещает потаенные уголки</i> студенческой мотивации... Наша работа анализирует <i>лабиринтный ландшафт инноваций</i> в образовании...
14	The clever and the show-offy	the captivating use of alliteration, the vivid sound effects of onomatopoeia, the elegant internal rhyme, numerous puns, or employing charm or uniqueness in introductions, transitions, or conclusions	Класс похож на <i>жужжащий улей</i> , чувствуется волнение учеников, которые стоят на пороге будущих открытий... Учитель создает <i>гармоничную мелодию</i> разнообразных образовательных методов... В <i>мозаике многокультурного образования</i> оттенки разнообразия этнических групп сливаются в <i>единство достойное восхищения</i> ...
15	The nonsensical	nonsense extends the duration of both the physical and conceptual components within a sentence. It may manifest as an oxymoron, something impossible, or illogical	Парадокс поощрения <i>включительной исключительности</i> в образовательной политике... Противоречивая природа поощрения <i>автономной зависимости</i> в студенческой автономии... Нелогичность ожидания <i>дивергентного мышления</i> в системе <i>конвергентного обучения</i> ...
16	The beautiful	complex terminology and expressions that may sound impressive but are inappropriate for the writing context, resulting in difficulty in comprehension	<i>Деконструктивный анализ образовательных идеологий</i> раскрывает скрытые динамики власти, присущие образовательным системам... <i>Диалектический синтез</i> критической педагогики и <i>практики эмансипации</i> подвергает сомнению <i>гегемонистские структуры угнетения образования</i> ... <i>Постколониальная критика</i> образовательных программ раскрывает <i>неоколониальные идеологии, унаследованные в образовательных дискурсах</i> ...

Table 3. Cases of Wordiness in HSE University and Moscow City University Theses

Type	Bachelor's Thesis		Master's Thesis		Candidate's Thesis	
	HSE	MCU	HSE	MCU	HSE	MCU
The redundant	9	9	9	10	12	16
The already understood	3	8	4	4	8	6
The empty	12	8	9	11	19	30
The evasive (intentional or otherwise)	0	0	3	6	7	0
The weak-kneed and the passive	8	17	17	13	5	4
The weak, the noncommittal and the hesitant	0	0	1	0	1	1
The affected	0	0	0	1	1	1
The circuitous	0	0	0	0	1	2
The self-indulgent	0	9	8	0	10	4
The overkill	9	10	16	24	23	43
The inflated and the deflated	2	7	6	8	5	2
The invisible and therefore unnecessary	34	27	16	34	22	23
The imprecise	0	0	2	1	1	1
The clever and the show-offy	0	0	0	0	2	1
The nonsensical	0	0	0	2	0	2
The beautiful	4	5	0	0	2	2
Total	81	100	91	114	119	138



The Weak-kneed Type of Wordiness in Bachelor's Theses. The most vivid examples of weak-kneed types of wordiness combine weak verbs and partially evasive constructions to hide the uncertainty: “На основании проведенного исследования и вышеуказанных выводов можем заключить, что создание комплекса упражнений для развития ЛК учащихся профильного класса средствами аутентичных англоязычных песен – трудоемкий процесс...” (B11, HSE); “Кроме того, в данной главе мы *предприняли попытку* обозначить изучаемый концепт британской эксцентричности в лексико-фразеологической семантике...” (B12, HSE); “В рамках данной выпускной квалификационной работы нам *удалось сделать* следующее...” (B13, MCU); “Данная выпускная квалификационная работа *позволила обратиться* к актуальной проблематике совершенствования грамматических навыков учащихся основной общеобразовательной школы...” (B18, MCU).

The instances of wordiness provided by the examples above highlight inability of Bachelor students to think structurally, to synthesize knowledge. They follow well-known patterns to adhere to established traditions in academic discourse based on oratorical principles that limit clarity of their text perception.

*Master's Theses.* 205 examples of wordiness in the Master's Theses sub-corpus were found, which belong to 13 types of wordiness. Almost a quarter (50) of wordiness cases found in the Master's Theses represents the invisible and therefore unnecessary type. The prevalent types are also the overkill (40) and weak-kneed (30) wordiness (Appendix 3).

The Invisible Type of Wordiness in Master's Theses. The chosen examples underline the lack of skills in academic writing aimed at precision of the ideas. Thus, the utilization of vague and unnecessary words distract the reader's attention from the conclusions themselves: “В целом, несмотря на то, что еще многое предстоит сделать, мы считаем проделанную работу, и в частности, попытку внедрения геймификации в разработанную учебную систему успешной” (M7, HSE); “С одной стороны, такой подход позволил погрузиться в творчество и ощутить «дух первооткрывателей», но

с другой, оглядываясь назад, стоит отметить, что предварительное изучение литературы на первом этапе позволило бы сэкономить время на разработку...” (M7, HSE); “Изучение истории данного вопроса показывает, что множество авторов, описывая психофизическое своеобразие данного возраста, отмечали комплексный характер восприятия мира, эмоциональной сферы, мышления” (M20, MCU); “Таким образом, цель исследования достигнута и подтверждена гипотеза исследования” (M20, MCU).

The Overkill Type of Wordiness in Master's Theses. At this stage of education master students better realize that justification of their ideas is crucial, nevertheless, due to the lack of skills on reasoning and poor abilities in analysis and synthesis of their ideas they tend to excessive argumentation: “Данный модуль соотносится с моделью постдипломного образования педагога, описанной в постановочной части проекта. С точки зрения ценностного уровня, данный модуль ориентирован на рефлексивного педагога, выступающего субъектом своей деятельности и профессионального развития, следующего за изменениями его эпохи и пользующегося ее возможностями” (M6, HSE); “Так мы решили, что методическая разработка будет создана для обучения со 2-го класса. Вместе с тем мы исследовали содержание российских и зарубежных программ по развитию социально-эмоциональных навыков. И в ходе анализа мы выделили подходы и упражнения, которые могут быть использованы на уроках литературного чтения” (M9, HSE); “Проанализировав образовательные программы по изобразительной деятельности в детском саду, нами было определено следующее: в ходе реализации изобразительной деятельности у детей продолжается развиваться интерес к изобразительной деятельности; развивается эстетическое восприятие; происходит формирование и закреплять представления о форме предметов, величине, расположении частей; развиваются способности наблюдать, всматриваться в явления и объекты природы, замечать их изменения; дети учатся передавать в изображении основные свойства предметов

(форма, величина, цвет), характерные детали, соотношение предметов и их частей по величине, высоте, расположению относительно друг друга; совершенствуются изобразительные навыки и умения, формируются художественно-творческие способности” (M18, MCU); “Он дает детям возможность активно проводить каникулы, учит их создавать новое и изучать историю. Также учит различным формам взаимодействия в коллективе, показывает ценности взаимоотношений в команде, учит ставить цели и достигать результаты” (M22, HSE).

The Weak-kneed Type of Wordiness in Master’s Theses. The overuse of weak verbs and purposeless words still remains one of the key features underpinning the low level of master students’ academic writing skills development: “В результате проведенного анализа мы смогли создать методическую разработку для проведения уроков по литературному чтению с целью развития социально-эмоциональных навыков во 2–4 классах” (M9, HSE); “Мы старались брать уже апробированные задания из программ по развитию навыков, адаптировали их и связывали с произведениями по литературному чтению” (M9, HSE); “Так, изучение общего понятия и специфики педагогического дискурса, позволило прийти к выводу, что педагогический дискурс представляет собой важнейших тип дискурса...” (M15, MCU); “В результате рассмотрения когнитивного стиля личности и индивидуального значения слова, был сделан вывод о том, что важнейшим фактором формирования понятийной системы, которая и определяет в дальнейшем структуру и содержание образа мира, понимание личностью действительности, является именно формат кодирования информации, которому личность обучается в школьный период...” (M15, MCU).

*Candidate’s Theses.* We detected 16 types of wordiness in Candidate’s Theses. The most frequent were the overkill (66), the empty (49) and the invisible types of wordiness (45) (Appendix 4). The number of cases of the overkill wordiness in the theses of HSE University and Moscow City University differs significantly, namely, the Candidate’s theses of MCU

contain approximately 2 times more of the overkill type of wordiness (43) than those of HSE (23). The frequency of the invisible type of wordiness can be considered equal (22 and 23 examples for each university) (Table 3). The most typical examples of wordiness cases are presented below.

The Overkill Type of Wordiness in Candidate’s Theses. Provided examples reveal that post-graduates despite acquiring knowledge in academia and developing their skills in research delivery still lack the ability to convey their ideas clearly. The most examples of wordiness highlight their desire for overly argumentation that diminishes credibility of their research: “Данная модель состоит из восьми взаимосвязанных компонентов: задачно-целевого, средового, субъектного, методологического, мотивационно-деятельностного, содержательного, диагностического, результативно-рефлексивного. Спецификой данной модели является наличие средового мегакомпонента, который оказывает влияние на все остальные компоненты модели. Содержательный компонент модели обусловил разработку и реализацию программы педагогической поддержки профессионального выбора обучающихся в условиях ЦОС школы” (C1, HSE); “В ходе диссертационного исследования были решены следующие задачи: проанализирован международный опыт проведения и исследований университетских объединений, разработана система ключевых характеристик реорганизаций университетов, описана история отечественной образовательной политики и выделены основные периоды университетских объединений и их особенности, на основании предыдущих проведенных этапов анализа выделены шесть основных исследовательских кейсов университетских объединений в России, описаны их сценарии как официальные, так и те, что выделены на основе ответов студентов, проведена серия интервью и фокус-групп, выделены и интерпретированы категории, показывающие, какова роль студентов в условиях слияний и поглощений университетов” (C4, HSE); “За более чем полувековую историю исследования вопросов родительской вовлеченности было предложено несколько моделей



родительской вовлеченности и получены ответы на ряд вопросов о роли родительской вовлеченности в учебных достижениях детей, о связи уровня родительской вовлеченности с характеристиками семей” (С15, МСU); “Нами впервые была изучена структура дружеских связей учащихся в масштабе города и выявлена зависимость вероятности дружбы между учащимися двух школ от географического расстояния между ними. Нами также была изучена эволюция социальных связей учащихся образовательной организации, показано, что уровень дифференциации этих связей по академической успеваемости возрастает с течением времени, объяснены механизмы этого явления. Нами была показана дифференциация интересов учащихся в зависимости от успеваемости, впервые дана оценка различий в образовательных достижениях между подписчиками разных групп. Нами было показано, что как социальные связи учащихся, так и их интересы обладают большой предсказательной силой в отношении академической успеваемости” (С19, МСU).

The Empty Type of Wordiness in Candidate’s Theses. The excessive argumentation and clichés used by postgraduates as milestones in their research are abated by empty modifiers and introductory phrases that are meaningless: “Подобные продолжения диссертационного исследования, возможно, позволят проблематизировать, есть ли, в целом, в отечественном образовании влиятельные и слышимые группы” (М4, HSE); “В частности, дискуссионным остается вопрос относительно системной политики слияний и объединений университетов” (М4, HSE); “Так, учащиеся 9-х классов в России отметили, что *значительно чаще* работают на уроках математики с понятиями из алгебры...” (М18, МСU); “Во-первых, *лишь в некоторых случаях* частота использования отдельных методик обучения в разных классах *значимо отличалась*” (М18, МСU).

The Invisible Type of Wordiness in Candidate’s Theses. This type of wordiness is the least represented at postgraduate level of studies, nevertheless, these conventional phrases and overused word pairings add

nothing to the conclusions themselves and hurdle the perception of the content: “Полученные в исследовании результаты свидетельствуют о том, что объединение вузов в регионе может приводить к понижению уровня конкурентной среды, а в перспективе и к общему снижению эффективности региональных сетей организаций высшего образования” (С2, HSE); “Что касается значимости данных результатов для образовательной сферы, то стоит отметить, что в ходе интервью матери зачастую упоминают обстоятельства, которые с точки зрения концепции родительской...” (С3, HSE); “Следует также отметить, что предлагаемые методические рекомендации не подменяют и не разрушают фундамент системно-деятельностного подхода, а лишь дополняют его инструментом, отвечающим на запросы современности как в образовательной среде, так и за ее пределами” (С13, МСU); “При разработке стратегии развития экспортной деятельности необходимо уделить особое внимание проработке и обсуждению тактических шагов в этом направлении, которые должны соответствовать общей миссии и долгосрочным планам развития вуза” (С21, МСU).

### Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study offer valuable perspectives on recognizing instances of wordiness, as categorized by Brohaugh [26], illuminating ineffective academic writing practices and formulating essential strategies to address them. The authorial team operated from the premise that the implementation of targeted courses designed to improve academic writing skills at every educational level is expected to notably advance the writing competencies of post-graduate students. Contrary to the hypothesis, the analysis revealed that 40% of the identified instances of wordiness were found in Candidate’s theses, indicating a higher frequency of wordiness compared to Bachelor’s theses (28.1%) by 11.9%, and Master’s theses (31.9%) by 8.1%.

While text wordiness is a key indicator of academic writing quality, it is not the sole criterion for effective academic communication. Understanding the rhetorical structure of manuscripts belonging to specific research

genres, their functional content, adhering to standards of academic honesty, and following the best examples of academic culture are equally important [1]. Academic writing skills ought to be cultivated not merely as a detached linguistic component but through understanding the purpose of each element of text produced. This involves mastering the language, structuring the text effectively, using rhetorical strategies, and employing visualization tools. The goal is to convey information to readers in a clear, unambiguous, and concise manner.

Traditionally, undergraduate students are rarely taught academic writing skills, which can lead to a lower quality of their research papers. Electives, various workshops and retreats are not sufficiently able to meet students' needs in developing academic writing skills. Moreover, this need is not exclusive to students aiming to continue their education at the Master's or postgraduate levels. Academic writing serves as an efficient tool for information presentation, where each word functions properly, and the text saves the reader's time. It is equally effective in both academic discourse and professional settings [15]. It's crucial to develop writing skills; essentially, any text should be successful, which is unattainable without systematic practice in this direction [9].

Academic writing courses are necessary at all educational levels [13; 18]. Many universities provide basic academic writing courses at the Master's level, but this process requires further development: such courses are not available for all disciplines, some of them are superficial and do not lead to desired outcomes. At the postgraduate level, students are expected to possess academic writing skills, but an analysis of the results of the current study shows that even in universities that pay significant attention to developing academic writing skills at all levels of education, academic texts still suffer from wordiness, at least. Both the rhetorical implementation of the Conclusion section and the functional content of each rhetorical step (Appendix 1) were found to be weak, indicating insufficient student engagement in academic writing development courses.

The analysis of the obtained results indicates that invisible wordiness is the most frequent type of wordiness in student works,

inherent in both bachelor's and doctoral works. However, more specific types of wordiness such as the overkill and the weak-kneed are more common at higher education levels. This underscores the need for a deeper understanding of different types of wordiness and their impact on text readability and comprehension. This understanding will enable the tailoring of academic skill development courses to reduce text wordiness, according to the needs of each education level. For example, bachelor's works clearly strive not to deviate from templates and clichés. Lacking sufficient experience in producing effective academic texts, they aim to use available patterns and clichés to the maximum. As a result, the text of the Conclusion section looks extremely similar across various works. But even this approach does not save from wordiness: novice researchers still do not know how to present information concisely, seeing an instrument to mask their uncertain authorial voice in excessive introductory phrases and clichés. However, in Candidate's theses, reflecting the authors' level of preparedness for transparent and effective representation of the described research, we encounter massive manifestations of wordiness, weak rhetoric and functionality. On the one hand, the authorial voice has strengthened, but on the other, there is a clear lack of mastery over effective speech generation strategies. The expanded Conclusion section (compared with Bachelor's and Master's research) results in an increase in cases of wordiness (Appendix 1). Thus, systematic errors with the development of academic writing skills at the previous education level remain not just unresolved but are compounded. Here, analyzing the prevailing types of wordiness can provide a powerful insight for their resolution.

The presence of academic experience in researchers often leads to an improvement in their ability to avoid wordiness. However, it also generates so-called professional narcissism [29] when authors stuff the text with unnecessary words, "professionalisms", and introductory phrases. Demonstrating cases of "narcissism" in the text during the teaching of academic writing at various educational levels will contribute to the development of effective written speech production strategies, at least in terms of reducing text wordiness.



The more frequently students at all levels of education are involved in scientific research activities with subsequent description of its results in various genres of academic communication, the stronger their academic writing skills. Understanding the “beauty” of academic language poses a challenge when the author lacks clarity on the subject and purpose of their description. Articulating research findings through a lens of deep insight into the structure, rhetoric, and functional aspects within a specific genre enhances cognitive engagement, enriching comprehension of the subject matter. Thus, speech generation in the genre of scoping review and empirical research has different focuses. It’s significantly easier for students to grasp different speech generation strategies through specific approaches and in the context of peculiar scientific results that need to be described.

*Suggestions.* The linguistic articulation in the Conclusion sections of academic theses necessitates clarity and brevity to avert misconceptions and the incorporation of equivocal content. Śleszyńska underscores this need within the framework of a skill-oriented ESP course tailored for technical higher education institutions, stressing the imperative of clear and succinct expression [9]. She observes that non-native speakers of English frequently transpose idiosyncrasies from their mother tongues into academic English, thus diluting the lucidity of their writing. Our study, examining texts in the native language of the authors, discerned a tendency for integrating clichés and syntactic structures from English into Russian.

Furthermore, we advocate for meticulous scrutiny of collocational use in the Conclusion sections of theses to obviate inaccuracies fostering wordiness. This recommendation is in concordance with Demir [24], who investigated Introduction sections within empirical articles, emphasizing the criticality of linguistic precision to uphold the integrity and succinctness of scholarly discourse.

Authors should strive for direct communication, curtailing wordiness to prevent readers from confusion. Pinker attributes the obfuscation engendered by protracted sentences to a form of professional narcissism, advocating for simplicity and directness in

academic texts [29]. Efficient writing entails the excision of ‘empty words’ such as ‘really’, ‘totally’, ‘very’, ‘actually’, and others, favoring instead evaluative adjectives, for example. Pruning of writing should also involve the eradication of superfluous modifiers such as ‘much’, ‘many’, and similar intensifiers. Every highlights the significance of avoiding such lexical elements in medical research articles, noting their tendency to obscure rather than elucidate [27].

Structuring writing by minimizing redundant repetitions is essential to maintaining reader engagement and comprehension. This approach aligns with Messuri, who offers practical strategies for achieving clarity in medical student compositions [30]. Also, academic writing should avoid the utilization of literary expressive means and stylistic devices, with a preference for straightforward, affirmative sentences over the convoluted ones, or sentences with double negation [24], commonly found in poetic works.

Adoption of the active voice over passive constructions not only enhances clarity but also reduces the propensity for wordiness. Every contends that the active voice facilitates direct and unambiguous communication, in contrast to the passive voice which tends to elongate and complicate sentence structure [27]. The judicious employment of boosters and hedging devices is also crucial. Pinker criticizes the overuse of hedging in academic circles as a tactic for evading responsibility, advocating for moderation in their application [29]. Consistent with recommendations across various studies [24; 27; 30], the avoidance of lengthy phrases in favor of simpler expressions and the meticulous editing and proofreading of final drafts to eliminate redundancy are proposed.

Our research advocates a holistic strategy for mitigating wordiness, predicated on corrective feedback with comprehensive rationale, investigation into the psychological motivations for hedging, and elucidation of concepts across diverse academic genres. Endorsed by the findings of Chapman et al. [31], we assert that this integrated method significantly surpasses more rudimentary corrective techniques. Additionally, aligning with Śleszyńska [9], we support the idea of an educational paradigm that fosters linguistic awareness among

researchers, from novices to experienced, enhancing their writing skills through consistent practice and broadening their academic expressiveness beyond mere adherence to the conventions of academic English and specialized terminologies.

*Limitations.* This research is confined to the disciplines of Pedagogics and Education, exclusively analyzing theses written in Russian. It is structured around a singular taxonomy, focusing solely on the characteristics identified by the taxonomy's creator while omitting considerations of parts of speech and superfluous clauses. Additionally, the scope of this study is restricted to examining the Conclusion sections of the theses. Future investigations could uncover additional types of wordiness and examine their presence across different sections of academic research.

*Conclusion.* To conclude, this study sought to pinpoint instances of wordiness, employing Brohaugh's [26] taxonomy as a foundation for understanding inefficient academic writing practices and devising vital strategies to overcome them. Contrary to our hypothesis, our findings reveal a prevalent occurrence of wordiness across educational levels, with Candidat's theses exhibiting a notably higher incidence compared to Bachelor's and Master's theses. This suggests that the mere provision of specialized academic

writing courses across educational tiers may not suffice to enhance postgraduate writing skills to the anticipated degree.

The study underscores the complexity of academic writing and the multifaceted nature of wordiness, suggesting that addressing this issue requires more than just formal training. It points to the need for a holistic approach to academic writing education, one that integrates continuous practice, feedback, and a deeper understanding of the principles of effective communication. Furthermore, the prevalence of wordiness in higher academic works underlines the necessity for ongoing support and refinement of writing skills, even among the most advanced scholars. It highlights the importance of fostering a culture of clarity, conciseness, and precision in academic writing, which can contribute significantly to the quality of scholarly communication.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the academic discourse by providing evidence that enhancing writing proficiency is a continuous process that extends beyond formal education. It calls for the development of tailored writing support systems that address the unique challenges faced by writers at different stages of their academic careers, ensuring that they can effectively communicate their research with integrity and precision.

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