

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FUNCTIONAL STYLISTICS

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Abstract

We highlight the importance of the editing of scientific paperwork as the correct drafting of the scientific papers is very important, because the way the findings of scientific research are transmitted and their practical use lead to fast and efficient communication between specialists.

The quality and accuracy of language, the lack of grammatical errors, following the norms of the scientific style, is imperatively imposed.

Moreover, it is about complying with the copyright, highlighting the scientific values in the field, in the sense of promoting the norms of stylistic language of research as a new set of values.

Key words: *Science, Research, Style, Errors, The functions of language.*

1. Introduction

Due to the accelerated pace of change which makes the world evolve so fast, we understand that the driving force is science, and implicitly, scientific research.

Starting with the definition of *science*, which implies the systematically study of all works and phenomena that can be investigated, tested and verified, outlining the way people understand universe, humanity and themselves. Science evolves through objective analyses, and knowledge is accumulated in time. The, “scientific” attribute characterizes that form of knowledge that satisfies a number of requirements and general and particular methodological criteria (Patrașcu, 2003, p. 17).

Scientific research is explained as the activity of fundamental, applied and experimental developing research (***Codul cu privire la știință și inovare al Republicii Moldova*** /Code no. 259 regarding science and innovation of RM, 2004, art. 4 – our translation).

Research is recognized as an integral part of university education. It is essential for students, because they can develop critical thinking and can think independently, also they can appreciate the importance of scientific research for the purpose of economic growth of the country. The students’ involvement in research requires time, preparation and effort to have the results published.

The direct involvement in research during university studies may considerably contribute to the way in which the education beneficiaries will perceive the scientific

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act and its impact upon society. That is why nowadays the need to develop responsibility is increasingly important.

Dorogan and Todos (2008, p. 11) consider that the main obligation of society towards the young generation is to map education to the rigors of time.

Universities prepare students by the related disciplines in the curricula and project work, in order to carry out research that meets such rigors.

“The writing of methodological-scientific papers is a test meant to highlight the candidate’s capacity to evaluate and use the accumulated experience, to investigate by using the methodology of pedagogical research, educational phenomena, and to identify factors, meanings and ways to improve/ innovate/ develop the educational process. The writing of papers must show the candidate’s concern with systematically updating their specialised and psycho-pedagogical knowledge, to analyse and critically evaluate various approaches to the teaching methodology” (*Metodologia formării continue a personalului didactic din învățământul preuniversitar /Methodology of continuing training of teaching staff in pre-university education*, 2009, art. 67 (1) – our translation).

Writing a scientific text is a complex process that requires specific knowledge and skills. The expository form of the paper and the internal clarity of the text are important aspects that must observe the scientific style of writing.

We live in a world that deals with serious moral dilemmas, where superficial approaches are increasingly preferred and the scientific style loses its value.

2. Scientific style

The way an individual arranges words, the way of speech, the way of expression form a style. Style has its roots in the linguistics manifestation of the modern human being, having in this meaning the premise of originality (Buffon, 2011).

The norms and principles of writing a scientific text require that research should be more objective and better documented, every sentence being required to face the trade-offs between clarity, concision, tone, cadence, accuracy and other values.

Scientific style is the expression of language usage in order to know the world scientifically. The correct writing of scientific papers is important, for several reasons:

- the way the results of scientific research are transmitted depends on the practical use of these results;
- writing a paper according to rigorous norms leads to fast communication between specialists, which is imperative in our age, dominated by the Internet;
- the scientific works that are impeccably written are more likely to be accepted for publishing in journals or specialised volumes than negligent works, many editors imposing a set of standardized norms to their collaborators;
- finally, “the correct writing of presentations and scientific articles contributes to the development of the scientific style, techniques and art of

scientific writing, also to the development of the art of speaking as well as the perfection of moral and ethic features of scientists, researches and specialists" (Rad, 2008, p. 27 – our translation).

Georges Louis Leclerc, count of Buffon (1707–1788), in one of his speeches said: "Writing well is at one and the same time good thinking, good feeling, and good expression; it is having wit, soul, and taste, all together..." "The style is the man himself" (...) The components of a writing plan: the rhetorical situation and the organisation of material must also be taken in account. The rhetorical situation is shaped by the following elements: the author's intention, the personality of the author, the potential readers, the content of communication and appropriate language (Chelcea, 2003 – our translation).

In a paper about the functional styles of the Romanian language, Irimia (1999) draws on the classification of the functions of language proposed by Jakobson:

a) *the referential function*, also called cognitive or denotative, which takes into account the objective extralinguistic reality towards which the transmitter manifests an objective, neutral attitude;

b) *the expressive function* or emotive that is manifested by an effective attitude towards the extralinguistic reality;

c) *the conative function* that is similar to *the expressive function*, being different in the sense that the transmitter wishes to involve the receiver in the linguistic performance; and that the transmitters show a specific attitude towards the receiver;

d) *the metalinguistic function* operates in the sense of introducing linguistic elements for defining some components of the language code used within the text.

e) *the phatic function* is language for the sake of interaction between *the addressee* and *the addresser*, being the opposite of the referential function, referring to the intrinsic organization of the text and to the poetic knowledge of the world, too (Rad, p. 32 – our translation).

Following the classification proposed by Irimia, we shall examine the scientific style, based on several levels:

Morphematic level:

a. frequency of nouns and pronouns, as a result of dominance of the referential function;

b. frequency of proper and abstract nouns (especially in Philology);

c. the lack of interjections, which can be present in the didactic variant of the scientific style;

d. the predominance of the 3rd person. The 1st person plural indicates the plurality of authority or modesty.

Concerning the adjectives, we note no degrees of comparison, or just the positive degree of comparison (Rad, 2008, pp. 34-35).

e.g. *People have started to live in **big** cities over time.*

The verb phrase:

a) the intensive use of the Indicative, the Infinitive and the Conditional, and the absence of the Imperative (although it may be present in the didactic variant, in such expressions: *to underline, to be solved, to be, to show* etc.);

b) the use of the presumptive, often found in historical texts (*I would have, it should have been*);

c) the use of the atemporal Present (mostly in historical texts).

Lexical level:

Words must be used without any expressive function, having denotative meaning.

Other features of the scientific style:

Fairness means observing the norms of the literary language. Frequent deviations: anacoluthon (lexical-syntactic discontinuity within a sentence or phrase) and **solecism** (syntactic error).

Logic implies the correct ordering of ideas, passages etc. The transfer from one idea to another, from one passage to another is done by the proper numbering of these divisions of scientific texts (Rad, 2008, p. 37).

Preciseness expresses the ability to use just words required for communication, to find words which best reflect the idea. Antonyms of preciseness: prolixity, digression, formal rhetoric, preciousness (the excess of neologisms in a text).

Unity: it can be obtained by using specialized terminology established in this field. This terminology will be used throughout the paper (Rad, 2008, p. 38).

Clarity: implies the clear, logical, coherent formulation of ideas, so that the receiver fully understands the message. It is recommended to avoid too specialized terminology, pleonastic constructions and contradictions.

The antonyms of *clarity* are: *obscurity, nonsense, evocation, pleonasm, tautology, paradox, gibberish* (confused or meaningless words).

3. The role of literature review during research

A great importance in research is held by specialized literature analysis relevant for the topic theoretical foundations.

The review of specialized literature helps to:

- solid knowledge in the field: concepts that operate within the topic, theories, investigated domains, used methods, data sources, difficulties, results and conclusions;

- identify the current stage of development in domain, the context where the research will be placed, and to develop your own research topic (the feasibility of the topic);

- understand how to connect ideas in the literature, between the literature and your own ones; the basis is the material (which was critically but objectively analysed, by comparison and formulating remarks and conclusions) to develop knowledge;

- develop the skills of interpreting, to clearly formulate points of view, and, eventually, achieve new interpretations;

- allow the formulation of criteria for evaluation and argumentation of one's own research (whether the opinions of others have been confirmed or denied, if knowledge has been fully rounded with new meanings - from the methodological

point of view there are some controversial issues in previous research, the current research represents a plus brought to knowledge);

- acquire knowledge about the way how to elaborate a Master's or PhD thesis as a proof of the capacity to understand the academic requirements (Bîrsan, n.d., p. 10).

Synthesis is the most important in reading specialized literature; also the sources must be updated, depending on domain/ topic (in exact sciences that are dealing with fundamental and/or experimental research, especially in "top" domains). Updated means announced, communicated, published and latest discoveries (that appear in abstracts). Thus, in socio-humanities the history of opinions, methods, debates, etc. are recommended.

The novelty of research does not appear in books but in articles, studies, conference presentations; starting with the latest publications and those edited earlier in order to follow the development in the field. Literature filing is a main research activity and the following types of files underpin the writing elaboration of a paper:

a) Bibliographical/ reference file that is drawn up from the beginning, from the first reading. All the data will be noted down, according to the academic norms, regarding the list of references (see, bibliographical norms) (author, year, title, the publishing house, etc.) in alphabetical order. This file is not omitted, because it is necessary both for the preparation and verification of the final list of references, as well as for avoiding the loss of data/information.

b) Thematic files. There are as many files as concepts, opinions, ideas, key terms, etc. present in the studied works; there are comments, comparisons, evaluations and points of view. The exact data of the paper are written down.

c) Quote files (optional); quotes that refer to the subtopics from the thematic files can be placed in this field. A quotation is the short form of the reference, inserted in the text in round brackets or added in the text as a footnote, at the end of the chapter or of the entire text. The citation allows to identify the publication from which the quoted or the commented idea was extracted and to indicate the location within the source publication (Chelcea, 2016).

The method of reviewing literature is established: chronologically or thematically. It is NOT acceptable to have summaries - article after article, author after author, etc. in order of appearance and evolution of these works, chronologically, especially when it comes to certain trends, schools of thought, etc., or linking the main concepts / ideas through the works in which they appeared.

The same concept / idea is developed in different authors' works. There are the same approaches, but somehow different from one author to another; an evolution can be observed over time, combining the thematic and chronological approach (Bîrsan, n.d., p. 11).

In this sense, Chelcea (2016) analyses the citation styles, mentioning the existence of different styles of presentation of the bibliographic references used in research. They have been elaborated by scientific associations, editors, etc., used according to the organization/writing where the manuscript is submitted. Style refers

both to the mode and to format in which the source is mentioned in the text, and to the list of references: the order and the format.

Chelcea provides different examples of them, after numbering the citation styles. For example, the APA style: Summary references, usually in the form (author-year), are inserted into the text, exactly where they are needed.

- It's an Author style, Year. The text references are presented as follows: (Neaşcu, 2015);

- The final bibliography is alphabetically arranged;
- It is a style of quotation used in the social sciences (ex. Psychology, Sociology, Political Science), as well as in related fields;
- APA style does not use, footnotes, Latinisms (idem, ibidem, op. cit.).

E.g.: "Language is the main code through which the informational content and action programs of the individual psychic system are transmitted and learned ..." (Buzdugan, 2008, p. 73 – our translation).

The APA style reference list is presented as:

Buzdugan, Tiberiu (2008). *Psihologia pe înţelesul tuturor*. Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, p. 73. ISBN 978-973-30-2355-5.

Vancouver Style is another type of citation style (the numerical system). The numbers are presented in round brackets (4), square brackets [4], or in the form of exponents ⁴ inserted in the text, refer to the information resources in the order in which they are first cited. Subsequent citations of the information resource receive the same number as the first citation. If only certain parts of the information resource are cited, the respective number can indicate the page (Chelcea, 2016).

E.g.: "Nowadays, scientific research, on the other hand, cannot be imagined without an intense, ordered, directed, opened and underlined information transfer" (4); or:

"Nowadays, scientific research, on the other hand, cannot be imagined without a transfer of information: intense, orderly, directed, open and nuanced." [4, p. 25] or (4, p. 25).

The Vancouver style reference list is as follows:

Cerghit, Ion. *Metode de învăţământ*. Iaşi: Polirom, 2006. 315 p. ISBN 973-46-0175-X.

If we use the quotation without quotation marks, without the author's indication or without the correct indication of the source, it becomes plagiarized - full takeover and appropriation as its own text (DEX online.ro).

In this context, it is beneficial to combat the unethical behaviour used in research, in order to observe the copyright, but also to defend scientific values.

By reviewing specialized literature, one can follow the topic with its issues and the methods that have been used in relation to various aspects of the topic:

a) arranging the ideas from the literature around concepts, ideas, not the person of the authors, who is in the subsidiary. So no simple summaries...

b) showing the connection with one's own research; the review of literature is not an goal' itself', something taken out of context.

It is advisable to start with articles that refer to the literature overview, which refer to what exists in the literature on the topic (it makes reading literature much easier), then to the basic works (reference books), articles, conferences presentations, in order to become familiar with the issues in the field, see the evolution of ideas, make comparisons.

A synoptic picture of these concepts, opinions, sources, own comments, etc., facilitates the literature review process. It shows the results in the literature on the topic (Bîrsan, n.d.p. 12).

4. Errors in research

In every scientific study, regardless of the type and level of evidence, there is a risk of making various errors at every stage of research. As a result, without the author's awareness, false indicators and conclusions can often be obtained.

The most common grammar errors in scientific works are:

1. Confusing the plural designation "--uri" with "- e" and vice versa, the designation "- e" with "--uri".

The conservative and innovative tendency of the plural spelling of some neutral nouns is disposed to write the "-uri" designation instead of the "- e" designation.

E.g. *Chiar entitățile fruntașe se situează sub nivelul celor mai slab dezvoltate state europene – ba chiar și sub **baremurile** din unele țări africane...* the correct version: *Chiar entitățile fruntașe se situează sub nivelul celor mai slab dezvoltate state europene – ba chiar și sub **baremele** din unele țări africane"* (Rădulescu, 2015, p. 24).

*s-au luat pe toate **aeropoartele** din lume,* the correct version: *-au luat pe toate **aeroporturile** din lume* (Rădulescu, 2015, p. 21).

The author underlines the fact that the hesitations between the two designations could be stopped, if an orthographic dictionary is consulted:

3. Confusing the sequences „-ează” with „-ază”.

One of the most common writing mistakes that both adults and children make is to conjugate the verb "to create" (*a crea*). E.g.: *Crează blogul tău gratuit*, the correct variant is *Crează blogul tău gratuit, ne **creem** o părere ...*, the correct variant is *ne **creăm** o părere, voi **creiați** viitorul...*, the correct variant is *voi **creați** viitorul...*

3. The wrong agreement in gender and number, both of the relative pronoun "which" (connector of an Attributive Clause) with the noun that follows it, as well as of the genitive morpheme "al"/"a" with the noun which precedes it in the Main Clause. E.g.: *A luat **măsuri** extrem de dure, **al cărui** rezultat se va vedea peste timp*, the correct variant would be: *A luat **măsuri** extrem de dure, **al căror** rezultat se va vedea peste timp* (Rădulescu, 2015, p. 24).

It is a violation of the rule of "cross agreement" ... the possessive article agrees with the noun in the Attributive Clause (not with the preceding noun or with the immediately following pronoun), and the relative pronoun, with the replaced noun in the Main Clause (not with the following noun whose attribute it is) (Avram, 1986).

4. Confusing the designation of the third person of the present Indicative and of the infinitive ending of some verbs with the infinitive ending in "- a" "with those

of the verb with the infinitive in "-ea", "-e" or "-i". E.g.: *Evenimentele se succed cu rapiditate în Grecia*, the correct variant is *Evenimentele se succedă cu rapiditate în Grecia* (Radulescu, 2015, p. 59).

The verbs "a preceda" and "a succeda", whose present Indicative in the third person singular and the third plural receives the ending "-ă" not "-e" in the singular and plural.

5. The phenomenon of "hyper-correctness" can also become a source of writing or pronouncing mistakes. It is a special type of linguistic deviation and it even manifests with some cultivated speakers who, by trying to avoid mistakes, apply, through a false analogy, grammatical rules that they do not fully master. Thus, out of fear of disagreement, we may deviate from the rule. E.g.: "ei or să aștepte", instead of "ei vor aștepta". Hypercorrect are spellings such as: *bleumaren, saten, spicher; Alfred Nóbál* (for *Alfred Nobel*), *Cicago* (for *Chicago*), *Riceard Wagner* (for *Richard Wagner*), *Rio de Haneiro* (for *Rio de Janeiro*), *Uaterlu* (for *Waterloo*) în loc de *bleumarin, satin, spicher; Alfred Nobél, Sicago, Rihard Wagner, Riu de Janeiru, Vaterlo* (Silvestru, 2016).

6. The mistaken usage in invariable form (regardless of context) of the noun phrase *din punct de vedere*, ignoring the literary variant *din punctual de vedere* (al). E.g.: *Din punct de vedere al legislației...*, the correct variant: *Din punctul de vedere al legislației* (Rădulescu, 2015).

7. Other difficulties are related to the usage of words recently borrowed. Some words have adapted to the Romanian spelling: *abțibild, angro, henț, ofsaid, scadență, stecăr, vizavi*. Other words have kept their original form: *allegro, ausländer, business, café-concert, copyright, en détail, müsli, paparazzo, science-fiction*. There are also situations when both forms, the original variant as well as the variants adapted to the Romanian spelling are present: *bodyguard / bodigard, boss / bos, cocktail / cocteil, derby / derbi, ghem / game (tennis game), pickhammer / picamar, pizza / piză*. Neologisms whose meaning is not so well known are often used inappropriately, distorted or confused. Formal resemblance often leads to semantic confusion: *a investi, licențios, lucrativ, profuziune, investing*. There are cases when a word can be part of a pleonastic construction: *a-și aduce aportul, cazul în speță, mijloace mass-media, oprobriu public, scurtă alocuțiune* (Silvestru, 2016). E.g.: *A implementa (implement)* does not mean *a introduce*, but *a pune în funcțiune, a realiza, a îndeplini*; *a integra* does not have the meaning of *integrating* (some mistaken expressions are: *integrare în muncă, integrare în grup, integrare europeană*, etc.), it means the action of *formare a unui întreg din mai multe părți componente* (for example, *integrarea României cu structurile europene*) (Chelcea, 2003, p. 55).

8. The Romanian spelling and writing sometimes tends, incorrectly, to turn the voiceless consonant "s" into the voiced consonant "z", which runs against the current spelling norm. The choice between "s" and "z" is one of the most difficult problems of the Romanian spelling, both due to the complexity and diversity of the rules, as well as their oscillating solutions and some controversial aspects (Avram,

1990). E.g.: *Premizele sunt asemănătoare*, the correct variant being *Premisele sunt asemănătoare*.

9. The spelling of a large number of words is faulty in different forms: how to correctly write the demonstrative pronoun, *aceeași* or *aceiași*. Both forms that derive from the demonstrative pronoun *același* are correct, with the mention that *every* is used for a certain gender and number. The confusion between the two forms is the fact, they have the same spelling.

We do not write *aceiași regulă*, but *aceeași regulă*, ***aceiași politicieni stabilesc limitele acestor donații...***

10. The faulty spelling of some verbs whose phonetic structure is suppressed, in an unjustified manner, a vowel or consonant, becomes a common tendency of the spoken style. E.g.: *omul este capabil de a transcende natura...*, the correct variant is: *omul este capabil de a transcende natura....*

11. The preposition *pe* is used instead of the prepositions *cu*, *după*, *la*. Eg: ... *depinde pe ce nivel de decizie se situează*, the correct variant is: ... *depinde la ce nivel de decizie se situează* (Rădulescu 2015, p. 216).

12. Disagreements are at the top of grammatical errors, ***decât being used instead of numai or doar***. E.g. Nu erați decât doar doi, the correct variant is: *nu erați decât doi/ erați doar doi*.

13. *Pleonasm* can be defined as "an error of expression that consists in the usage of words, expressions, sentences that unnecessarily repeat the same idea", according to the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (DEX). Often, pleonasms, including those accepted, come from the incorrect adaptation of the neologisms, as the linguists Dragomirescu and Nicolae explain (2011). E.g.: *ortografie corectă, asigurarea securității, muncă laborioasă, perspectivă de viitor*.

14. The wrong usage of the verb *a trebui*, the present Indicative form, 1st person *trebuiește* and the third person plural *trebuieșc*. The correct present Indicative form (unique for all persons and numbers) is *trebuie*. E.g.: *lucruri care nu ne trebuieșc neapărat*, the correct variant is: *lucruri care nu ne trebuie neapărat* (Bahnaru, Druță, Verebceanu, 2014).

15. Of the most frequent errors of expression is the non-use of the preposition *pe* before the relative pronoun *care* with syntactic function of direct object. The norm of the Romanian language requires that the relative pronoun *care*, with a direct object function should be preceded by the preposition *pe*. Eg: *asigurările astea care le plătesc pentru pensii angajații*, the correct variant is: *asigurările astea pe care le plătesc pentru pensii angajații*.

In order to determine the errors of expression (a practical activity in the discipline Methodology and ethics of research in the social and behavioural sciences) several scientific articles published C- and B-ranked journals were analysed.

As a result, it was established that most errors appear in the conference proceedings. This fact can be explained by:

- the participation of many young researchers (Master's students, PhD students);
- these articles are not always reviewed;

- there are no financial sources to pay for editing;
- high expectations of written communication skills with researchers;
- tight deadlines for editing and the large number of articles.

After the analysis of 35 articles, different spelling, punctuation, logic and stylistic errors were found - see the figure below:

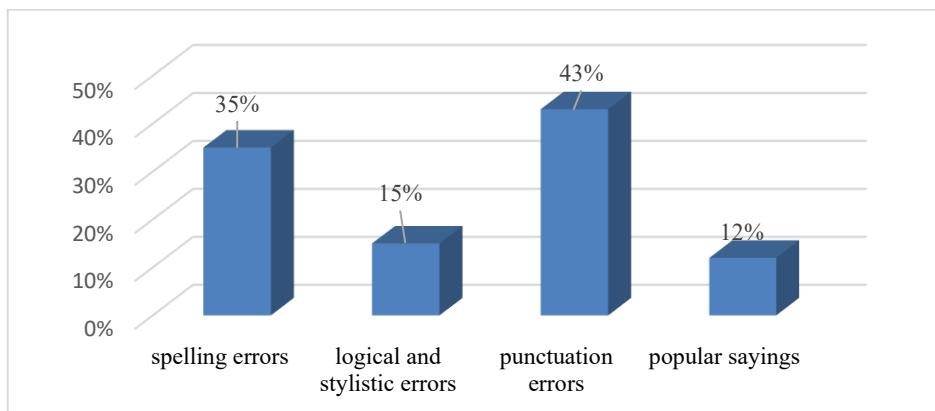


Figure no. 1. Types of errors in scientific articles (authors)

It can be noticed that the most frequent mistakes are related to punctuation (43%), especially the usage of the hyphen and the inaccurate use of commas. E.g: the conjunctions *așadar* and *prin urmare* used are isolated by a comma (*Istoria limbii române literare este, așadar, o disciplină recentă...*); the coordinated sentence parts introduced by the conjunctive prepositions, *atât...cât și, nu numai...ci și, nu atât ...cât* are separated by a comma.

Other errors found after analyzing the articles are:

- punctuation errors in the parts of the sentence that represent enumerations, examples, specifications,
- the use of phrases belonging to regional dialects,
- sentences are sometimes distorted and ambiguous,
- semantic errors: pleonasm, tautology, patronymic confusion,
- morphologic-syntactic errors (anacoluthon),
- repetition of words,
- the use of the adverb *decât* instead of *doar* or vice versa,
- the wrong agreement of the possessive article: a, al, ai, ale,
- confusion of terms *datorită* and *din cauza*.

The analysis of the types of errors helps the Master's students draw up their own article according to the scientific style.

5. Conclusion

Research is an integral part of education regarding the presumed relationships between certain phenomena: an activity for discovering the truth.

The correct drafting of the scientific papers is very important, because the way the findings of scientific research are transmitted and their practical use lead to fast and efficient communication between specialists.

Scientific research must be of quality, not only with respect to the ideas expressed, but also concerning the accuracy of the language, appropriate to the situation. The problem of the correctness of the spoken and written language has been and remains a topical issue. What seemed to be the norm yesterday, today is no longer the norm. Under the circumstances, the propagation of the norms of the literary language is imperatively imposed.

When reviewing mainstream literature it is important to abide by the citation rules in order not to be accused of plagiarism. We must comply with copyright and highlight the scientific values in the field.

It is important that every scientific study should be error free at all stages of the research in order not to obtain false indicators and conclusions.

In order to perceive the importance of errors in scientific works, 35 articles from different types of journal categories were analyzed, identifying 43% punctuation errors, followed by 31% grammatical errors, and the usage of colloquial phrases is observed (12%).

Essentially, it is important to promote the four pillars of society - education, research, development and innovation. It means first of all a new set of values and the immediate support of these social activities.

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