FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Once Again, an Article about Where it Is Best to Publish Scientific Papers

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I have already written a short paper on this subject [1], but it seems to me that the circumstances warrant a new discussion. The President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Yu.S. Osipov, has appealed to Russian scientists to publish their papers in Russian (cited by [2]): “Unfortunately, the case is that the English language has become dominant in the world, also in science. This is truth. Therefore, scientists revert to journals published in English. However, I state (and this is actually so) that there are first-class journals of the world-class level in Russian and foreigners take it as a great honor to publish articles in these journals. To raise the level of our journals, it is necessary to write good papers in them, instead of sending these abroad ... if a person is a high-class expert, he or she will also learn Russian and also read papers in Russian. What a strange statement of the problem! Why should we Russian people learn English to read papers in English and they will not learn Russian?”

This appeal has many critics. Thus, Academician M.V. Sadoyskii wrote in [2]: “I think that the number of patriots of the fatherland among Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Chinese, Japanese ..., it is not less than among Russians, but their journals have been published almost wholly in English for a long time.”

I have recollected the times of the war with “cosmopolitanism,” from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. One can perceive the spirit of that time, after reading the answer of the well-known Russian analytical chemist, Professor N.A. Tananaev to an invitation to become a member of the editorial board of the journal *Analytica Chimica Acta*. Here is Nikolai Aleksandrovich’s letter: “Dear Sir! Having received a telegraph proposal from You, I could not rapidly reply because of the ambiguity of my functions as a member of the editorial board. Later, I received a letter that informed me that I, in addition to other things, have to do all that is necessary to provide the journal with a great number of papers from Russia. From this letter I have learned that papers will be printed in English, French, and German (obviously to give the journal an international character). Therefore I, a Russian scientist, should convince my colleagues to send their papers to Your journal for printing in different languages, among which there is no Russian hero-language, the language with which the Red Army saved the European people and their tongues from the Nazi yoke. The Red Army won not only thanks to its heroism, courage, the art of

its commanders, and the genius of Generalissimo Stalin, but also thanks to the superiority of their engineering, which is impossible without a high level of scientific creativity. Meanwhile, the languages in which Your journal will publish scientific reports do not include Russian. I hope that You, having perceived the sense of the aforesaid, will recognize the impossibility of accepting Your proposition. I appeal for you, dear sir, to take accept my perfect respect. Professor Doctor N.A. Tananaev.”

Professor Tananaev was, probably, proud of his answer; he allowed editors to publish it in *Vestnik vysshei shkoly* [3] and was promoted by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of the Soviet Union, A.M. Samarin: “This refusal by Prof. Tananaeva to participate in the work of this journal was dictated by his good sense of pride for our people ... It is not for us to bow before the authority of the West ...”

In 1947, a Professor of the Physical Faculty of Moscow University, A.A. Sokolov, applauded the cancellation of two of our physical journals that had been published in English since 1932: “... It is indecorous for the Soviet scientist to continue publishing his or her works in English only to assist foreign scientists to familiarize themselves with our works. Therefore, we should acknowledge the cancellation of the publication of these journals in the beginning of 1947. By publishing works in Russian, we will force foreign scientists to respect Great Russian, an international language in the epoch of socialism” (cited by [4]).

Now all this seems quite absurd; we have fortunately passed away from this absurdity.

However, now we read the proposal of the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences and we have something to think over and discuss.

We want our scientists to do good scientific research, to obtain important and interesting results; we want Russian science to make a considerable contribution to international science; we want the achievements of our science to enrich human knowledge and, whenever possible, provide benefit. However, we consider that our achievements must be known, in order that they should not be missed by the worldwide scientific community. We should not allow the possibility that our colleagues, participants of the overall competition of minds, will neglect our results consciously or, more often, unconsciously, only

because they were published in Russian in a bulletin of a peripheral university and were not reflected in abstract journals, serious databases, citation indexes, etc... A fatal problem arises: do we need publications that (let me exaggerate a little) remain unknown to the international scientific community? Only so that a list of publications, for example, in an autoabstract, will look respectable?

Papers in Russian, as well as in Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Hindi, Turkish, etc. are read by very few people. Therefore, by publishing our papers only in Russian, we keep our works unknown. We suffer not only in ourselves, but also decrease the authority of Russian science.

Who are better patriots: those who publish only in Russian or those who often submit papers to authoritative international and foreign journals published in English? It seems to me that the answer is evident.

It is not impossible that, after some time, our scientific journals will be issued in English, and only in English. We have many examples. The first journal on

analytical chemistry established in 1862, *Fresenius' Zeitschrift für analytische Chemie*, first became (*Fresenius' Journal of Analytical Chemistry*) and now is published only in English under title *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*. Journals on analytical chemistry that were previously issued in Spanish, French, or Polish have merged with other journals and are now published in English.

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