

OPINION¹

How to reduce redundancy in citations of taxa names in scientific publications

For a long time, I have been observing in scientific papers, published in peer-reviewed journals, some redundancy when dealing with taxon names (family, genus, and species groups). According to Article 29.2 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN), which deals with the suffixes for family-group names, “the suffix -OIDEA is used for a superfamily name, -IDAE for a family name, -INAE for a subfamily name, -INI for the name of a tribe, and -INA for the name of a subtribe”. Article 4.1 states the following: “The scientific name of a taxon of higher rank than the species group consists of one word (i.e. the name is uninominal); it must begin with an upper-case letter”. Any noun of a group with suffix -OIDEA, -IDAE, -INAE, -INI or -INA refers to superfamily, family, subfamily, tribe or subtribe, respectively. There is no need for additional words to refer to a taxon name. Some examples of alternative, more concise titles are as follows (here, and elsewhere, it is not implied any particular criticism on authors and the reviewers of the published papers): the title “First record of the family Furipteridae (Mammalia, Chiroptera) for the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil” could be “First record of the Furipteridae (Mammalia, Chiroptera) for the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil” (abstract of POL *et al.* 2003). The sentence “*Furipterus horrens* (Cuvier, 1828), the only species in the family Furipteridae known to occur ...” could be “*Furipterus horrens* (Cuvier, 1828), the only species in the Furipteridae known to occur ...” (abstract of POL *et al.* 2003). Likewise, genus-group names are formed by one word of two or more letters (Articles 4 and 11.8), with the first letter capitalized and are written in a font different from that used in the text (e.g., italic) (Appendix B – General Recommendations 6). Therefore, a generic name does not need to be preceded by the word “genus”. For example, the title “Revision of the genera *Sitalces*, *Eusitalces* and *Parasitalces* (Orthoptera, Acrididae, Abracrini) and description of three new genera” could be “Revision of *Sitalces*, *Eusitalces* and *Parasitalces* (Orthoptera, Acrididae, Abracrini) and description of three new genera” (abstract of COSTA & CARVALHO 2006). The sentence “The genus *Physopleurus* Lacordaire, 1869 = *Basitoxus* (*Parabasitoxus*) Fragoso & Monné, 1995 syn. nov. is revised ...” could be “*Physopleurus* Lacordaire, 1869 = *Basitoxus* (*Parabasitoxus*) Fragoso & Monné, 1995 syn. nov. is revised ...” (abstract of SANTOS-SILVA & MARTINS 2003). A species name is formed by two nouns (binominal; Article 5.1), the first being the generic name and the second, the specific name. The ge-

neric name must begin with an upper-case letter and the specific name must begin with a lower-case letter; both should be written in a font different from that used in the text (e.g., italic) (Appendix B – General Recommendations 6). Therefore, there is no need for the word “species” to precede the specific name. For example, the title “Morphology of immature stages in the neotropical nonfrugivorous Tephritinae Fruit Fly Species *Rachiptera limbata* Bigot (Diptera: Tephritidae) on *Baccharis linearis* (R. et Pav.) (Asteraceae)” could be “Morphology of immature stages in the neotropical nonfrugivorous Tephritinae Fruit Fly *Rachiptera limbata* Bigot (Diptera: Tephritidae) on *Baccharis linearis* (R. et Pav.) (Asteraceae)” (abstract of FRIAS 2008). The sentence “The species *A. itapuensis* and *Trichorhina* sp. presented the common characteristics of the endogean “creeper” species: ...” could be “*A. itapuensis* and *Trichorhina* sp. presented the common characteristics of the endogean “creeper” species: ...” (FRIAS 2008: 62). More critically, in the case of species names, the sentence “Several new species from throughout the Pacific (BMNH) differ from *nitida* in having...” should be “Several new species from throughout the Pacific (BMNH) differ from *Hecaloidella nitida* [or at least *H. nitida*] in having...” (ZHANG & WEBB 1996: 8). Although the examples cited above are not wrong and represent the authors’ own ways of writing, the acceptance of my suggestions will eliminate unnecessary redundancy in biological papers and, thus, we will have a reduction in the number of published pages. For example, in volume 25, number 1, of the Revista Brasileira de Zoologia, composed of 158 pages, the economy would be 10% of a page. Therefore, respecting any language rules and personal styles, the use of additional words to refer to a taxon name should be avoided.

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