高等院校研究性学习英语系列教材

英语学术论文写作实用教程

陈新仁 • 主编

English Research Paper Writing: A Practical Coursebook

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前言

学术论文写作是获得学位的基本要求之一，也是获得学术进步的重要手段之一。英语专业学生需要学会撰写规范的英语学术论文，而旨在国际学术期刊上发表自己观点的研究者更需要能够撰写规范的、高质量的英语学术论文。

与用汉语撰写的学术论文不同，英语学术论文在遣词造句、谋篇布局、学术规范等方方面面都有一套相对固定、成熟的体裁特点，需要英语学习者及研究者加以专门学习。随着学术研究国际化以及论文发表“英语化”的不断深入，最近20年来国内外先后出版了数量不少的面向英语学术(论文)写作的图书。总体看来，这些图书对提高人们的英语学术写作能力起到了非常积极的推动作用。从特点来看，这些图书往往注重知识性，强调规范性，突出研究性。不足之处在于，它们往往忽视相关知识在课堂中的适用性，缺乏对中国英语学习者实际困难的系统考虑。为此，我们引入研究性教学理念，在吸收现有英语学术论文写作研究成果的基础上，从中国学生的实际出发，面向学术论文写作的全过程，大胆革新，推出这部新型教材。

● 主要特色

1. 以中国学生在用英语从事学术论文写作面临的困难和问题为出发点和归宿，关注学术论文写作中的各种细节问题。重点关注英语语言表达，适当兼顾研究方法的说明。

2. 以学术论文写作的过程为主线，组织讨论各个阶段的重要话题和难点，强调所讲内容的层次性、相关性和针对性。

3. 以促进课堂互动为目标，通过讨论话题探讨英语学术写作的方法和技巧，提高学生发现问题、分析问题和解决问题的能力。

4. 以具有代表性和典型性的正反两方面的第一手论文实例诠释英语学术论文写作，突出内容讲解的可操作性和易习得性。

● 单元模块

1. Pre-Class Reading　　简要介绍本单元相关知识点，并通过Check Your Understanding检查阅读效果。

2. In-Class Activities	以节选的学术论文实例为依托，讨论与英语学术论文写作相关的研究方法、语言表达等，使用比较法、启迪法、追问法，激发学生思考。
3. Post-Class Tasks	结合本单元的知识点，提供各类形式的练习任务，巩固所学单元知识。
4. Project Work	鼓励学生开展课外团队学习，帮助他们学会如何收集素材、文献等，做演示文稿(PPT)，并在课堂上作汇报。

本书编写工作的具体分工如下：主编陈新仁负责设计全书的编写理念、写作思路、单元样本，同时负责各个单元的修订工作；其他作者承担了本书的编写工作。具体分工如下：李民编写 Unit 2，Unit 3 和 Unit 6；王宇编写 Unit 4 和 Unit 5；徐宏亮编写 Unit 7 和 Unit 8；毛延生编写 Unit 1 和 Unit 11 的部分内容；詹全旺编写 Unit 11 的部分内容，Unit 14，Appendices 1 和 2；曹瑞澜编写 Unit 12 和 Unit 13；景晓平编写 Unit 9；袁周敏编写 Unit 10。此外，陆国君曾参与本书的前期策划工作。王茜、徐炜、顾常扬收集了学术写作中常用的一些表达(见 Appendices 3)。

成书之际，我们要衷心感谢浙江大学外国语言文化与国际交流学院何莲珍教授、南京师范大学外国语学院马广惠教授、西南大学外国语学院刘承宇教授对本书给予的关注和厚爱；感谢任育新、王雪玉、钱永红、陈娟、卢加伟、钟茜韵等协助校对全部书稿。由于编者水平有限，各种谬误或疏漏在所难免，敬请读者批评指正。

编　者

2012 年 9 月

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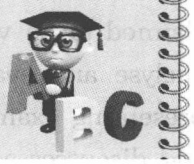
Unit 1 Rudiments of English Research Paper Writing

Pre-Class Reading

1.1 Defining research paper writing
1.2 Types of research papers
1.3 Principles of research paper writing
1.4 Styles of research paper writing
1.5 Structure of research papers



1.1 Defining research paper writing

A research paper can be a term paper for a curricular course, a published article in a journal, or a thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment for the requirements of a university degree. It is usually a long, documented report that focuses upon an academic topic, covering the research object, purposes, methods, results, conclusions, and implications.

Research paper writing is considered an enlightening activity for academia to access and update research. It is a kind of writing devoted to topics and questions that are of particular interest to the academic community, with an informed argument presented to the reader. Therefore, writing a research paper requires one to "seek out information about a subject, take a stand on it, and back it up with the opinions, ideas and views of others as evidence. What results is a printed paper variously known as a term paper or library paper, usually with a minimum length

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specified, in which you present your views and findings on the chosen subject" (Winkler & McCuen-Metherell, 2008: 3). In other words, a research paper is a kind of writing that is quite different from such writings as personal letters, literary entertainments, journalistic reports, business documents, etc. with regard to audience and purpose.

For one thing, unlike a personal letter intended for a certain intimate relation or a literary work intended for recreation, a research paper is primarily presented to experts sharing one's own research interest. For another, a specific and clear purpose matters a lot for a decent research paper. Unlike literary writing for which entertainment is the only purpose, or journalistic writing which sets informativeness or pervasiveness as the top goal, research paper writing regards explanation and argumentation as the primary purposes in that one's viewpoint on a certain issue is presented in the hope of convincing others.

In terms of methodology, research paper writing often contains an argument and critical analysis, and writers must know how to distinguish their own ideas from those of others. An argument, in academic terms, is something that is claimed to be valid on the basis of factual evidence for presentation. Academics analyse and evaluate the evidence upon which claims are based. This involves presenting examples and quoting relevant sources outside. An argument presents and discusses a central set of related claims in the form of a thesis or hypothesis. The result can be a synthesis or conclusion.

1.2 Types of research papers

Research papers mainly consist of course papers, thesis papers and journal articles. As course papers are relatively short and simple, we shall concentrate on the other two types throughout the book.

In general, thesis papers, including BA theses, MA theses, and PhD dissertations, are written with clear requirements such as a specific argument, critical evaluation and logical construction. Usually thesis papers are intended to explore a certain issue with one's stand clearly declared, compelling evidence presented in the form of quotes, statistics and comparative analysis on one's side. They are different from report papers in that the latter just retell the facts already collected into a report rather than manipulating them into a convincing conclusion.

Similarly, journal articles are essays with a rigid structure supported by

documentation and literature review. They use citations in a formatted style with a developed thesis and progressive argument. They often follow the format of Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion. Compared with thesis papers, journal articles are shorter in length but more condensed in content since they are intended for publication.

1.3 Principles of research paper writing

For research paper writing, the following principles deserve adequate attention (Winkler & McCuen-Metherell, 2008: 9):

- ◇ You must select a topic that is complex enough to be researched from a variety of sources but narrow enough to be covered in the restricted number of pages.
- ◇ You must do the exploratory scanning and reading of sources on your topic.
- ◇ You must gather information on your topic and assemble it into some usable sequence.
- ◇ You must outline the major parts of your paper.
- ◇ You must write a rough draft of the paper arguing, proving, or supporting your thesis with information uncovered by your research. You must acknowledge all borrowed ideas, data, and opinions.
- ◇ You must prepare a bibliography listing all sources used in the paper and you must write the final draft.

It seems that the principles above can be further refined into three macro-principles, as shown in the following table.

Table 1 Macroprinciples of research paper writing

Honesty	State only that which you can support with factual evidence. Always acknowledge the source of both evidence and ideas.
Relevance	Consider only that which is relevant to the topic, focus and objectives of your argument or discussion. Do not include anything that you cannot link to your argument. Do not put in your conclusion crucial information that has not previously been discussed in the body of your work.
Clarity	Be clear and direct in your logic and style. Be direct about your aims and objectives. Explain what needs to be explained, but assume your reader has basic knowledge of the world and the topic under discussion.

Last but not least, there is a consensus among academia to avoid gendered expressions. We just take "man" as an example, with the sexism-free equivalent provided for comparison:

Table 2 Comparison between gendered and gender-free expressions

Gendered expressions	Gender-free counterparts
man	human, person, mortal, humankind, humanity, human beings, human race, people
man-sized	sizable, adult-sized
man's achievement	human achievement
man-made	synthetic, manufactured, machine-made
common man	the average person, ordinary people

To handle the sexist problem, we may also use pronouns like "they" or "you". Here are some examples:

(1) **Gendered version**: As he advances in his program, the medical student has increasing opportunities for clinical work.

Revised version 1: As they advance in their program, medical students have increasing opportunities for clinical work.

Revised version 2: As you advance in your program, you have increasing opportunities for clinical work.

There are other means, for sure. Consider (2):

(2) **Gendered version**: The average student is worried about his grades.

Revised version: The average student is worried about grades.

As shown above, the deletion of masculine pronoun removes sexism effectively.

1.4 Styles of research paper writing

In general, research papers are formal, objective, and cautious.

Research papers are formal. They do not use contractions, colloquialisms or slang. For example, "is not" is preferred over "isn't" and "they've" needs to be substituted by "they have". Colloquialisms like "okay" or "pretty good" and slang expressions like "mess up" are avoided in research paper writing.

Mostly, research papers are objective. Generally, this means that subjective

expressions like "I think" and "I believe" are not good at all. Compare the following expressions:

(3) **Personal**: I chose this method because it is less complex.

Impersonal: This method is chosen because it is less complex.

As one can find, the passive voice is a very effective vehicle to help develop research papers with an impersonal style.

Research paper writing is cautious. There is frequent use of "hedging" expressions or vague language like "probably" and "to some extent". Actually, it is wise to use a cautious tone in research paper writing, because very often there is no absolutely right answer or perfect solution to the issues discussed. It is usually more appropriate to "suggest" when one is not in a position to "state" or "assert". Here are some examples of a cautious or tentative style:

Table 3 Examples of hedges for research paper writing

introductory verbs	e. g. seem, tend, look like, appear to be
lexical verbs	e. g. believe, assume, suggest, think, doubt, indicate
modal verbs	e. g. will, must, would, may, might, can, could
frequency adverbs	e. g. often, sometimes, usually
modal adverbs	e. g. certainly, definitely, clearly, probably, possibly, perhaps
modal adjectives	e. g. certain, definite, clear, probable, possible
modal nouns	e. g. assumption, possibility, probability
that clauses	e. g. It could be the case that ... It might be suggested that ... There is still hope that ...

1.5 Structure of research papers

Generally speaking, a thesis or dissertation is made up of an abstract, a table of contents and the main text, plus some minor but often indispensable elements like references (or bibliography, works cited), appendices and acknowledgements. While theses or dissertations may vary from each other, the following layout is recommended:

◇ Title page
◇ Declaration
◇ Acknowledgements (sometimes placed at the end)
◇ Abstract
◇ Table of contents
◇ The main text of the paper
◇ Notes
◇ Bibliography (or References, Works Cited)

The title page contains three main subdivisions: the title of the research, the author (and the supervisor) and the subject field information. For instance:

MEANING IN ACADEMIC CONTEXTS:
A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF PRAGMATIC UTTERANCES

By Paula Garcia

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Applied Linguistics
May 2012

The abstract, a miniature of the whole research (for guidelines of abstract writing, refer to Unit 2), follows the title page. The table of contents lists the titles and subtitles of the chapters in the main body part of the thesis or dissertation. These front matters are numbered with small Roman numerals (such as "i", "ii", "iii") at the bottom central or right-hand corner of the page.

The main body part of a thesis or dissertation often includes the following major sections, namely, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, (Theoretical Framework,) Results and Discussion, and Conclusion, as found in a linguistic thesis based on empirical research.

Check your understanding

Answer the following questions according to what you have read.

1. Why are research papers so important for the academia?
2. In what ways are research papers different from non-academic ones?
3. How many types of research paper writing are there? What are they?
4. What principles should be observed in research paper writing?
5. What are the stylistic features of research paper writing?

In-Class Activities

1. Go over the following two passages.

Passage One

This study investigated the types and functions of parental other-repetition in Mandarin parent-child interaction from a discourse-pragmatic perspective. The subjects of this study were two Mandarin-speaking parent-child dyads. The data included six hours of natural conversations recorded when the children were between the ages of 2 and 3. Parental other-repetitions were classified into four repetition types: exact, reduced, modified, or expanded. The different types of repetitions were further analyzed to examine the pragmatic functions of Mandarin parental other-repetition within the framework of communicative exchanges. It was found that the parents used the different types of repetition for a variety of communicative purposes such as acknowledging the receipt of information, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, targeting a next action, and reformulating the child's utterances. The results also showed that the parents' use of other-repetition reflected the particular nature of child-directed speech, and the

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