

21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材

学术 英语写作 基础教程

A Coursebook on
Academic Writing
for English Majors

徐宏亮 康敬群 编著



安徽大学出版社
ANHUI UNIVERSITY PRESS

21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材

学术 英语写作 基础教程

A Coursebook on
Academic Writing
for English Majors

徐宏亮 康敬群 编著



安徽大学出版社
ANHUI UNIVERSITY PRESS

内容提要

本书从语言形式层面出发,系统分析了英语本族语学术语篇的语言特征,以不同类型的任务为练习形式,强化了对学术论文中的语言特色的认知和操练,使学习者从实际操作中理解和掌握学术语篇的语言特征、知识和技巧,从认知和技巧层面全面提高英语学术论文写作能力。

本教材既可作为学术论文写作的教学用书,也可作为英语专业高年级选修课或青年教师学术培训的选用教材。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

学术英语写作基础教程/徐宏亮,康敬辉编著. —合肥:安徽大学出版社,2008.12
(21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材)

ISBN 978-7-81110-527-8

I. 学... II. ①徐... ②康... III. 英语—写作—高等学校—教材 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2008)第202493号

学术英语写作基础教程

徐宏亮 康敬辉 编著

- 出版发行 安徽大学出版社(合肥市肥西路3号 邮编230039)
联系电话 编辑部 0551-5108397 发行部 0551-5108743
电子信箱 ahdxchps@mail.hf.ah.cn
网 址 www.ahupress.com.cn
书 号 ISBN 978-7-81110-527-8
经 销 全国新华书店
印 刷 中国科学技术大学印刷厂
开 本 710×1000 1/16
印 张 12
字 数 222 千
责任编辑 刘中飞
特约编辑 张 雯
封面设计 孟献辉
定 价 24.00 元
版 次 2008年12月第1版
印 次 2008年12月第1次印刷

如有影响阅读的印装质量问题,请与出版社发行部联系调换

前 言



目前,国内针对我国英语专业本科学生的学术英语写作的教材品种繁多,水平参差不齐,侧重点也各不相同。这些教材以我国高等院校英语专业本科生为对象,大都专门探讨英语学术论文写作的格式、科学方法和技巧。它们的共同缺陷是仅从宏观上介绍学术论文写作中的选题、收集材料、做笔记、避免抄袭、序论、本论、结论、摘要、参考文献、致谢、附录等方面的内容,没有深入细致地系统解决英语专业本科学生学术论文写作时面临的语言形式层面的问题。它们的另一缺陷是使用大量篇幅讨论学术论文格式问题,如 MLA 或 APA 体例,没能真正为学生提供学术写作的实质性帮助。研究表明,学术论文中的语言问题是影响英语论文能否在国际权威杂志上发表的重要因素。由于这些教材存在这些重要缺陷,我们在使用时往往感觉到它们空洞说教的成分较多,不利于让学生了解日常英语和学术英语(English for Academic Purposes)在语言使用上的差异,不利于提高他们对学术英语语言特性的敏感度,不利于从语言技巧方面让学生了解学术写作的具体规范和体例,为他们将来的学术英语写作打下坚实的基础。

本书力图克服现有英语写作教材的不足,融理论与实践于一体,提供一套可供课堂操作的学术英语写作教材。本书具有如下几个方面的特点:

一、系统专业。从语言形式层面出发,系统分析了英语学术用语的语言特征,从学术论文写作和发表的角度,分专题进行了详细的内容讲解和习题设计,让学习者对学术语篇的语言特色(尤其是中国学习者常犯错误或容易出现错误的语言内容)有较为全面的理解和把握。这是本书比现有的学术英语写作教材更具创新性的显著特色之一。

二、取材广泛。本书的编写工作主要基于语料库语言学的研究成果,语言特征的确定和提取来源于庞大的、具有代表性的英语学术语言语料库。该语料库语篇样本主要来源于 *TESOL Quarterly*, *Applied Linguistics* 和 *Language Learning* 等国际权威应用语言学杂志。这个学术语篇数据库的建立,以及相关的前期研究成果,为本书的编写提供了重要理论依据和数据准备。

三、实践性强。本书的另一主要特色是突出强调实践性的习题设计。以不同类型的任务为练习形式,强化对学术论文中的语言特色的认知和操练,避免空洞说教。所有的练习题目均根据真实的学术英语语篇,以简洁、优美的语言描写相关语言特征之后,突出语言重点(Language Focus),精心设计了专项语言类练习,具有极强的真实性和代表性。各种练习的设计力图让学习者从实际操作中理解和掌握学术语篇的语言特征、知识和技巧,从认知和技巧层面全面提高英语学术论文写作能力。

四、讲解灵活实用。本书摒弃现有教材过分强调学术论文格式体例(如 MLA 或 APA 体例)的做法,集中讨论学术用途英语在语言知识和技巧层面的问题。这种编排既能很好地与英语专业二年级开设的《英语基础写作》相衔接,又能让学生顺利过渡到第七学期的《学术论文写作》课程。故本书可以根据具体情况安排在大三或大四年级使用,或作为学术论文写作的教学用书,也可作为英语专业高年级选修课或青年教师学术培训的选用教材,具有较为广泛的使用前景。

在编写《学术英语写作基础教程》过程中,我们参考了国内外相关教材和网站的一些实例或练习形式。所引用的材料一般已注明出处,未注明出处的是由于辗转引用,未能查出原作者或来源,为此编者对原作者或编者一并表示感谢。

本书已通过专家评审,被安徽省教育厅教秘高[2008]39号文件列为安徽省高等学校“十一五”省级规划教材,主要供高等院校英语专业本科生在英语写作课中使用,也可供有同等英语水平的英语写作自学者使用。

编写英语专业写作教材是一项十分艰巨而繁重的工作。尽管编者做了很大努力,书中的缺点仍在所难免,恳请专家、师生和读者批评指正。

编者

2008年10月10日于南京

Table of Contents



Unit 1 Features of Academic Writing 1

- 1.1 Complexity 2
- 1.2 Formality 11
- 1.3 Objectivity 17
- 1.4 Explicitness 21
- 1.5 Hedging 24



Unit 2 Critical Reading and Writing 28

- 2.1 Reading Critically 28
- 2.2 Reading like a Writer 33
- 2.3 Writing like a Reader 35
- 2.4 Suggestions on Reading Critically 38
- Language Focus (1); Taking a Stance 42
- Language Focus (2); Nominalization 44



Unit 3 The Front Matter of a Research Paper ... 46

- 3.1 Overview of the Research Paper 46
- 3.2 Acknowledgements 48

Language Focus (3): Patterns of Gratitude Expressions	51
3.3 Titles	53
3.4 Abstracts	54
Language Focus (4): Linguistic Features of Abstracts	60



Unit 4 The Body of a Research Paper (1) 62

4.1 Introduction Sections	62
4.2 Claiming Centrality	65
4.3 Creating a Research Space	70
4.4 Occupying the Research Space	76
4.5 Reviewing the Literature	79
Language Focus (5): Citation and Attribution	84
Language Focus (6): Reporting Verbs	90



Unit 5 The Body of a Research Paper (2) 100

5.1 Methods Sections	100
Language Focus (7): Imperatives in Research Papers	104
5.2 Results Sections	106
Language Focus (8): Epistemic Stance Markers	109
5.3 Discussion Sections	112
Language Focus (9): Sentence Adverbs	115
5.4 Conclusion Sections	117



Unit 6 Writing Data Commentaries 119

6.1 Strength of Claim	119
6.2 Structure of Data Commentaries	122

Language Focus (10); Attitudinal and Style Stance Markers 123

6.3 Moderating a Claim 125

6.4 Concluding a Commentary 130

6.5 Dealing with Diagrams and Illustrations 132



Unit 7 Writing Summaries 139

7.1 Pointers for Summary Writing 139

7.2 Avoiding Plagiarism 143

Language Focus (11); Passive Voice 153

Language Focus (12); Conditional Tenses 157



Unit 8 Critiques, Reviews and Reactions 160

8.1 Writing Critiques 160

Language Focus (13); Scare Quotes 165

8.2 Reviews 166

Language Focus (14); Shell Nouns 169

8.3 Reaction papers 173

Language Focus (15); Metadiscourse Devices 177



References 181

Unit



1

Features of Academic Writing

Academic writing in English is linear, which means it has one central point or theme with every part contributing to the main line of argument, without digressions or repetitions. Its objective is to inform rather than to entertain. As well as this it is in the standard written form of the language.

Academic English writing has some distinctive linguistic features which are often mentioned in writing manuals. For example:

- **It has a clear structure.** It is evident to the reader from the introduction that the writer has organized his or her thoughts and knows what he or she wants to communicate;
- **It has fewer clauses per sentence** than spoken English, but more words per phrase;
- **It has more nouns** (often abstract ones) than spoken English and fewer verbs;
- **It makes less use of coordination** (joining clauses with *and* or *but*) and greater use of subordination (joining clauses with words such as *while*, *because*) than spoken English;
- **It almost always uses the third person** (*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*), rarely uses first person (*I*, *we*) and never uses second person (*you*);
- **It makes limited use of personal pronouns for cohesion** (*it*, *them*), preferring other ways of achieving cohesion;
- **It avoids colloquial vocabulary;**
- **It avoids contractions** (*do not* is used rather than *don't*);
- **It avoids words that have emotional or attitudinal connotations;**

- It avoids phrasal verbs, e. g. *look into*, preferring single word often polysyllabic verbs, e. g. *investigate*;
- It uses linguistic “hedgies” (*probably, in most cases, seems*) to qualify generalizations.

In the following, we make a detailed explanation of the five main features of academic writing that are often discussed. Academic writing is, to some extent, complex, formal, objective, explicit, and hedged.

1.1 Complexity

Written language is relatively more complex than spoken language (Biber, 1988; Halliday, 1989). It has more subordinate clauses, more “that/to” complement clauses, more long sequences of prepositional phrases, more attributive adjectives and more passives than spoken language.

Written texts have longer, more complex words and phrases. They have more nominalizations, more noun-based phrases, and more lexical variations. Written texts are lexically dense compared to spoken language—they have proportionately more lexical words than grammatical words. The following features are common in academic written texts:

Subordinate clauses/embedding

A subordinate clause depends on the main clause which it modifies. Subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns are usually used to introduce dependent clauses.

- *The first characteristic reflects an experimental perspective of research in which comparison is made between two task types in a way intended to be of theoretical or practical importance.*
- *One goal of speech act realization research is to identify pragmatic features that native speakers of a language employ to achieve their communicative goals in speech events (Hinkel, 1997).*

Complement clauses

A complement clause is a notional sentence or predication that is an argument of a predicate.

that-clauses

That complement clauses occurring in post-predicate position are

commonly used to report speeches, thoughts, or emotions of humans. Extraposed that-clauses and that-clauses in subject position involve a main clause that often reports an attitude or a stance which is not overtly attributed to any person.

- *This conforms conveniently with Maslow's (1970) claim that human motivation is related to a hierarchy of human needs.*
- *It hardly comes as a surprise that the Chinese advanced EFL writers tended to use epistemic should fairly less frequently than the expert English writers.*

to-clauses

Infinitival complement clauses serve a wide range of functions; in addition to reporting speech and cognitive states, they are commonly used to report intentions, desires, efforts, perceptual states, and various other general actions.

- *From studies of speech perception in L2, we know that the phonological system of the native language constrains the L2 learner's ability to perceive and produce the sounds of the target language.*

of+ing-clauses

Of+ing-clauses are most common in academic proeses. Ing-clauses with adjectival predicates are commonly used in academic prose to express various kinds of impersonal stance.

- *Also, analyzing the components separately allows the possibility of discerning their relationships.*
- *It affords a relatively simple framework that is nevertheless capable of explaining the complex nature of writing process.*

Sequences of prepositional phrases

Sequences of prepositional phrases are common in academic English.

- *The similarities and differences between English and Mandarin in their respective syllable distributions for the six stops offered the possibility of forming four observation conditions against which Anderson's (1987) error frequency hierarchy could be compared.*

Participles

Formal written English uses verbs less than spoken English. -ed and -ing participles allow verbs to be used nominally or adjectively.

- *Similar temptations overcame philosophers concerned with establishing a secure base for individual responsibility.*
- *The Egyptians regarded time as a succession of recurring phases.*
- *A frequent change found in proper names is syllable loss.*

Passive verbs

In spoken English, we often use a subject such as “people”, “somebody”, “they”, “we”, or “you” even when we do not know who the agent is. In formal English, particularly writing, we often prefer to use a passive. Compare:

- *They're installing the new computer system next month.*
- *The new computer system is being installed next month. (more formal)*

Lexical density

Written English generally has a much denser pattern of words, it is more lexically dense. If we define lexical density as the number of content words in a clause, then written English has a higher lexical density than spoken English (Halliday, 1996: 347).

For example, here is a written text:

- *Obviously the government is frightened of union reaction to its move to impose proper behavior on unions.*

which is more lexically dense than the spoken version:

- *Obviously the government is frightened how the unions will react if it tries to make them behave properly.*

Lexical complexity

Adding affixes to existing words (the base) to form new words is common in academic English. Prefixes are added to the front of the base (*like* → *dislike*), whereas suffixes are added to the end of the base (*active* → *activate*). Prefixes usually do not change the class of the base word, but suffixes usually do change the class of the word.

The most common prefixes used to form new verbs in academic English are: re-, dis-, over-, un-, mis-, out-. The most common

suffixes are: -ize, -en, -ate, -(i)fy. By far the most common affix in academic English is -ize.

e. g. verb + prefix → verb

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
re-	again or back	restructure, revisit, reappear, rebuild, refinance
dis-	reverses the meaning of the verb	disappear, disallow, disarm, disconnect, discontinue
over-	too much	overbook, oversleep, overwork
un-	reverses the meaning of the verb	unbend, uncouple, unfasten
mis-	badly or wrongly	mislead, misinform, misidentify
out-	more or better than others	outperform, outbid

e. g. suffix used to form verbs with the meaning “cause to be”

Suffix	Example
-ize	stabilize, characterize, symbolize, visualize, specialize
-ate	differentiate, liquidate, pollinate, duplicate, fabricate
-fy	classify, exemplify, simplify, justify
-en	awaken, fasten, shorten, moisten

The most common prefixes used to form new nouns in academic English are: co- and sub-. The most common suffixes are: -tion, -ity, -er, -ness, -ism, -ment, -ant, -ship, -age, -ery. By far the most common noun affix in academic English is -tion.

e. g. noun + prefix → noun

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
bi-	two	bilingualism, biculturalism, bi-metalism
co-	joint	co-founder, co-owner, co-descendant
in-	the converse of	inattention, incoherence, incompatibility
inter-	between	interaction, inter-change, interference
mono-	one	monosyllable, monograph, monogamy
re-	again	re-organisation, re-assessment, re-examination
semi-	half	semicircle, semi-darkness
sub-	below	subset, subdivision
under-	below, too little	underpayment, underdevelopment, undergraduate

A Coursebook on Academic Writing for English Majors

e. g. suffix added to a verb (V), noun (N) or adjective (A) → noun

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-tion	action/instance of V-ing	alteration, demonstration
-ity	state or quality of being A	ability, similarity, responsibility
-er	person who V-s something used for V-ing person concerned with N	advertiser, driver computer, silencer astronomer, geographer
-ness	state or quality of being A	darkness, preparedness, consciousness
-ism	doctrine of N	Marxism, Maoism, Thatcherism
-ment	action/instance of V-ing	development, punishment, unemployment
-ant/-ent	person who V-s	assistant, consultant, student
-ship	state of being N	friendship, citizenship, leadership
-age	collection of N action/result of V	baggage, plumage breakage, wastage, package
-ery/-ry	action/instance of V-ing place of V-ing	bribery, robbery, misery refinery, bakery

Many adjectives are formed from a base of a different class with a suffix (e. g. -less, -ous). Adjectives can also be formed from other adjectives, especially by the negative prefixes (un-, in- and non-).

The most common suffixes are -al, -ent, -ive, -ous, -ful, -less.

e. g. suffix added to verbs or nouns → adjective

Suffix	Examples
-al	central, political, national, optional, professional
-ent	different, dependent, excellent
-ive	attractive, effective, imaginative, repetitive
-ous	continuous, dangerous, famous
-ful	beautiful, peaceful, careful
-less	endless, homeless, careless, thoughtless
-able	drinkable, countable, avoidable

e. g. adjective + negative → adjective

Prefix	Examples
un-	unfortunate, uncomfortable, unjust
im-/in-/ir-/il-	immature, impatient, improbable, inconvenient, irreplaceable, illegal
non-	non-fiction, non-political, non-neutral
dis-	disloyal, dissimilar, dishonest

e. g. base with both prefix and suffix

	-able	-tion	-tive	-ment	-ar
un-	uncomfortable unavoidable unforgettable		unimaginative		
mis-		misinformation		misjudgment mismanagement	
re-	recoverable recyclable	reformulation	reproductive	realignment repayment	
in-	irreplaceable	in-coordination inattention	inactive inoperative		
dis-		disconnection		disappointment	
semi-			semi-conductive		semi-circular

Nominalization

Formal written English uses nouns more than verbs, for example, “judgment” rather than “judge”, “development” rather than “develop”, “admiration” rather than “admire”. Instead of:

- *This information enables us to formulate precise questions.*
we would write:

- *This information enables the formulation of precise questions.*

Associated with nominalization is the occurrence of prepositional phrases, introduced by *of*, for example, *judgment of those*, *treatment of children*, *development of new aircraft*. Studies show that *-tion* is the most common suffix used in this way, for example: alteration, resignation.

Noun-based phrases

Formal written English uses nouns more than verbs. In the following example, the noun “evolution” is preferred to the verb “evolve” and the “wh-” clause.

- *Like all other forms of life, we human beings are the product of evolution.*
- *Like all other forms of life, we human beings are the product of how we have evolved.*

Look at another example, in which “the meaning of the symbols” is preferred to “what the symbols mean”.

- *Premack used a set of plastic chips to teach a chimpanzee named Sarah the meaning of a set of symbols.*
- *Premack used a set of plastic chips to teach a chimpanzee named Sarah what a set of symbols mean.*

Modification of noun-phrases

Written English is lexically dense—there is a higher proportion of content words per clause. This can be done by modification of noun-phrases.

premodifier + noun

adjective—*the constitutional aspects*

ed-participle—*a balanced budget, the emitted light*

ing-participle—*growing problem, existing structures*

noun—*market forces, cabinet appointments*

noun + post modifier

relative clause—*students who have no previous experience*

to-clauses—*the solution to the problem of inflation, the question to be debated*

ing-clauses—*a brake consisting of a drum divided into twelve compartments*

ed-clauses—*canoes preserved by a hard plaster, the curve shown*

prepositional phrase—*a special tool with a ready-compressed spring*

adverb (phrase)—*the road back, the people outside*

adjective (phrase)—*varieties common in India, the festival proper, something different*

Attributive adjectives

Adjectives can be used either attributively (e. g. *the big house*) or predicatively (e. g. *the house is big*). Attributive adjectives are common in academic English. *Halliday* (1989:79) compares a sentence from a spoken text with a typical written variant:

- *You can control the trains this way and if you do that you can be quite sure that they'll be able to run more safely and more quickly than they would otherwise, no matter how bad the weather gets. (spoken)*
- *The use of this method of control unquestionably leads to safer and faster train running in the most adverse weather conditions. (written)*

It is obvious that the main difference between these two sentences is the grammar, not the vocabulary. Other equivalents are given below:

Spoken	Written
Whenever I'd visited there before, I'd ended up feeling that it would be futile if I tried to do anything more.	Every previous visit had left me with a sense of the futility of further action on my part.
The cities in Switzerland had once been peaceful, but they changed when people became violent.	Violence changed the face of once peaceful Swiss cities.
Because the technology has improved it's less risky than it used to be when you install them at the same time, and it doesn't cost so much either.	Improvements in technology have reduced the risks and high costs associated with simultaneous installation.
The people in the colony rejoiced when it was promised that things would change in this way.	Opinion in the colony greeted the promised change with enthusiasm.



Task One

Put the following sentences in the passive form, beginning your sentences with "it".

1. We understood that Mr. Smith was willing to meet the British Prime Minister.
2. People consider that this surgeon is a brilliant practitioner.
3. When Chain came in on Sunday morning and saw the result, people say that he danced.
4. Somebody claims that the drug produces no undesirable side effects.
5. People expect that the electricity supply industry will be running into surplus capacity by next year.
6. Most people now think that only a small fraction of the nitrous oxide emitted to the atmosphere each year comes from fossil-fuel use, primarily coal.
7. At the present time, researchers believe that the only problem with daytime sleep is that it is too short.