



研究生用书

英语学术论文 写作教程

English Academic Writing

● 胡友珍 何小平 王志芳 编著



中国农业大学出版社
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内 容 简 介

《英语学术论文写作教程》以教育部颁布的《非英语专业研究生英语教学大纲》为依据,根据我国和我校博士研究生教学的实际情况和国家对 21 世纪高级技术和管理人才的要求进行编写。考虑到目前我国研究生层次多、专业杂,其入学英语水平参差不齐,教材要求以不同水平为起点,因此,本书编写力求满足新世纪对高级人才的期望,培养研究生扎实的语言技能,更注重其全面的应用能力,力求将语言教育和素质教育融为一体。

本书共分八章:英语学术研究和学术写作概要、英语学术写作风格与特点、英语学术写作相关技术和技巧、英语学术写作与网络资源、英语学术论文的写作过程、英语学术论文中文献与引用、英语学术论文中图表、英语学术论文发表。

本书既可以作为本科高年级学生、硕士生、博士生撰写学期论文和学位论文、发表学术论文的实用教材,也可以为从事高级英语写作、英语论文写作、学术英语写作的一线教师服务。还可以满足科研工作者撰写各类研究报告和科研论文的需要。

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出版说明

我国的研究生教育正处于迅速发展、深化改革时期,研究生教育要在研究生规模和结构协调发展的同时,加快教学改革步伐,以培养高质量的创新人才。为加强和改进研究生培养工作,改革教学内容和教学方法,充实高层次人才培养的基本条件和手段,建设研究生培养质量基准平台,促进研究生教育整体水平的提高,中国农业大学通过一系列的改革、建设工作,形成了一批特色鲜明的研究生教学用书,本书是其中之一。特别值得提出的是,本书得到了“北京市教育委员会共建项目”专项资助。

建设一批研究生教学用书,是研究生教育教学改革的一次尝试,这批研究生教学用书,以突出研究生能力培养为出发点,引进和补充了最新的学科前沿进展内容,强化了研究生用书在引导学生扩充知识面、采用研究型学习方式、提高综合素质方面的作用,必将对提高研究生教育教学质量产生积极的促进作用。

中国农业大学研究生院

2008年1月

Compiler's Words

The Academic Writing is compiled according to the “English Academic Writing for Non-English-major Graduates” promulgated by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China with the particular considerations of the need of doctoral candidates in their academic paper writing in the country. The characteristics of this book are as follows:

1. The content of the book is the summary of compilers' years of teaching and writing experiences and also the review of both the latest domestic and international academic publications in the related field.

2. This book provides readers with both macro- and micro-introductions of academic paper writing. The macro-introduction includes the overall research methodology and the entire structure of a paper, while the micro-structure contains the basic writing techniques and the whole writing process. In addition, the book also presents paper submission and publication.

3. The prominent feature of this book lies in its abundant resources on academic writing with the aid of internet. The knowledge of digitalization of the conventional paper writing practice will surely improve the readers' scholastic abilities in this information age.

4. Relevant exercises and adequate supplementary reading materials are also offered in each chapter of the book for self study.

Specifically, the divisions of the book by each individual compiler are as follows:

chapters one, two, and three: Hu Youzhen;

chapters four, six, and seven: He Xiaoping;

chapters five and eight: Wang Zhifang.

In fact, this book is not only applicable for graduate students with different English levels, but also pertinent for lecturers with the various writing tutorial workloads, and for researchers in scientific fields as well.

September 2010

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Academic Research Writing

1 Definition of Academic Research

The word **research** derives from the French *recherche*, from *rechercher*, to search closely where “chercher” means “to search”. In *Collins English Language Dictionary*, “research” is defined as “a detailed study of a subject or an aspect of a subject. If you do research, you collect data, analyze facts and information and try to gain new knowledge or new understanding” (Collins, 2000, p. 1231).

Academic research, or scholarly research, can be defined as the search for knowledge or any systematic investigation to establish facts. The primary purpose for applied research (as opposed to basic research) is discovering, interpreting and developing methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of scientific matters of our world and the universe. Research can use the scientific method,

but need not do so. ①

1.1 A Simplified Model of Academic Research^②

1.1.1 Having *Good Questions*

Three features decide whether the questions are good or not: *significant*, *original* and *answerable*.

A *significant* question refers to the question which must be of practical and/or theoretical value.

An *original* question is regarded as one which is different from questions having been asked by other researchers in one or more aspects. An original question does not need to be totally new. In reality, originality can be a matter of degree.

An *answerable* question is one that can be managed by the researcher within the time, his/her ability and resources available.

1.1.2 Employing a *Systematic Approach*

Any good academic research needs to employ a systematic approach to get its findings. A systematic approach means that research should follow a set of procedures which are clearly described and can be fully justified. If other researchers want to use the same approach, they can easily copy it.

① Research (n. d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 24, 2010, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research>.

Note: With the development of internet resources, wikipedia and other similar websites are becoming commonly cited in academic articles, especially when looking for specific and hard to define terms and definitions with its large public-created archives. Accordingly, this book uses several internet references.

② Wen, Qiufang (2001). *Applied Linguistics: Research Methods and Thesis Writing*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. p. 5.

But no approach is perfect in the realistic research. Thus a systematic approach should not be understood as an impeccable approach. Actually, it is wise for researchers to admit that there are limitations in their studies.

1.1.3 Obtaining *Valid* Answers

The answer to a question must be of high validity. When an answer is said to be valid, it means that the claimed answer is the only answer we can obtain. If more than one answer is available to the question, it is usually invalid.

1.2 Classification of Academic Research

Academic research can be classified into different types according to subject matter, research method, research aim, and the source of data.

1.2.1 Subject Matter

From the subject matter, academic research can be divided into *scientific research*, *artistic research* and *historical research*.^①

Scientific research relies on the application of the scientific method, harnessing of curiosity. This research provides scientific information and theories for the explanation of the nature and the properties of the world around us. It makes practical applications possible. Scientific research can be subdivided into different categories according to their academic and application disciplines.

Generally, scientific research is understood to follow a certain structural process. The following steps are usually part of most formal re-

^① Research (n. d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 24, 2010, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research>.

search, both basic and applied:

- formation of the topic
- hypothesis
- conceptual definitions
- operational definition
- gathering of data
- analysis of data
- test, revision of hypothesis
- conclusion, iteration if necessary

Artistic research, also seen as “practice-based research”, can take form when creative works are considered both the research and the object of research itself. It is the debatable body of thought which offers an alternative to purely scientific methods in research in its search for knowledge and truth.

One of the characteristics of artistic research is that it must accept subjectivity as opposed to the classical scientific methods. As such, it is similar to social sciences in using quantitative research and intersubjectivity as tools to apply measurement and critical analysis.

Historical research is embodied in the scientific method. The historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use historical sources and other evidence to research and then to write history. There are various history guidelines commonly used by historians in their work, under the headings of external criticism, internal criticism, and synthesis. This includes higher criticism and textual criticism. Though items may vary depending on the subject matter and the researcher, the following concepts are usually part of most formal historical research:

- identification of origin date
- evidence of location
- recognition of authorship
- analysis of data
- identification of integrity
- attribution of credibility

1.2.2 Research Method

The goal of the research process is to produce new knowledge. From the aspect of research method, research takes three main forms: *exploratory research*, *constructive research*, and *empirical research*, though the boundaries between them may be obscure.

Exploratory research^① is a type of research conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined. Exploratory research helps determine the best research design, data collection method and the selection of subjects. Given its fundamental nature, exploratory research often concludes that a perceived problem does not actually exist. Exploratory research provides insights into and comprehension of an issue or a situation. It should only draw definitive conclusions with extreme caution.

The results of exploratory research are not usually useful for decision-making by themselves, but they can provide significant insight into a given situation.

Constructive research^② is perhaps the most common research method of computer science. This type of approach demands a form of validation

① Exploratory Research. (n. d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 29, 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exploratory_research.

② Constructive Research, (n. d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 29, 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructive_research.

that does not need to be quite as empirically based as in other types of research such as exploratory research. Nevertheless the conclusions have to be objectively argued and defined. This may involve evaluating the “construct” being developed analytically against some predefined criteria or performing some benchmark tests with the prototype.

The term “construct” is often used in this context to refer to the new contribution being developed. “Construct” can be a new theory, algorithm, model, software, or a framework.

Empirical research^① is research that derives its data by means of direct observation or experiment. Such research is used to answer a question or test a hypothesis (e. g. “Does something such as a type of medical treatment work?”). The results are based upon actual evidence as opposed to theory or conjecture, as such they can be replicated in follow-up studies. Empirical research articles are published in peer-reviewed journals. Such research may also be conducted according to hypothetico-deductive procedures which test the feasibility of a solution using empirical evidence.

The term *empirical* was originally used to refer to certain ancient Greek practitioners of medicine who rejected adherence to the dogmatic doctrines of the day, preferring instead to rely on the observation of phenomena as perceived in experience. In scientific context the term *empirical* refers to the gathering of data using only evidence that is observable by the senses or in some cases using calibrated scientific instruments.

The empirical researcher attempts to describe accurately the interaction

① Empirical Research, (n. d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 29, 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empirical_research.

between the instrument (or the human senses) and the entity being observed. If instrumentation is involved, the researcher is expected to calibrate his/her instrument by applying it to known standard objects and documenting the results before applying it to unknown objects.

In practice, the accumulation of evidence for or against any particular theory involves planned research designs for the collection of empirical data, and academic rigor plays a large part of judging the merits of research design. Several typographies for such designs have been suggested, such as the widely cited distinction among pre-experimental, experimental, and quasi-experimental designs.

1. 2. 3 Research Aim^①

In terms of different aims, two types of research can be identified: *theoretical* and *practical*.

Theoretical research is primarily concerned with constructing theories or testing existing theories, rather than resolving practical issues.

For a M. A. or Ph. D student, it is rare to write a thesis or dissertation exclusively on theoretical research since this kind of research requires a profound understanding of the topic you are investigating.

Practical research, also called *applied research*, refers to scientific study and research that seeks to solve practical problems. Practical research is used to find solutions to everyday problems and attempt to solve concrete problems in all walks of life. The findings from such research usually can be directly tried out by practitioners. Novice researchers usually begin their research life from practical research.

① Wen, Qiu Fang (2001). *Applied Linguistics: Research Methods and Thesis Writing*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. p. 13