English for Research Paper Writing
Roadmap of the Session

- Importance of English language for Researchers
- Rules of Academic Writing
- Ways to Engage and Enhance
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Importance of English language for researchers
Do you think the English language is vital for research?
English language for Researchers

1. Communicating Effectively
2. Participate and Present with Impact
3. Writing Research Papers
4. Paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism
5. Writing the Research Thesis
Ph.D. Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Philosophy - Phil + Sophia
Phil - love / affinity
Sophia - goddess of wisdom
Education

\[ e + ducare = \text{pull or draw something out (duct)} \]

Research

recerche (noun), rechercher (verb), from Old French
re- (expressing intensive force) + cerchier ‘to search’.
Researchers with strong communication skills are more likely to

- publish in international journals
- successfully promote their research and represent their institution at conferences
- gain funding from international bodies
- effectively communicate with the wider public and policy makers
- build international collaborations to further their research
What do researchers write?

Abstracts
Emails
Messages
Proposals
Papers
Posters
Research

The physical process of gathering information + the mental process of deriving the answer to your question from the information you gathered.

Research Writing

The process of sharing the answer to your research question along with the evidence on which your answer is based, the sources you used, and your own reasoning and explanation.
Do you know what these terms really mean?

typology
statistical probability
meta-analysis
inductive reasoning
epistemology
causal relationship

Are you really expected to know what they mean?

Would it be acceptable for you to have a vague idea of their meaning?

Would it be all right for you to know what they mean but not use them?
Definitions

- Typology: a classificatory system with which the researcher categorises data; frameworks with which to organise observations.
- Statistical probability: how far it is possible to draw an inference from a sample and generalise it to a wider population.
- Meta-analysis: a statistical technique for combining and integrating the data drawn from a number of experimental studies undertaken on a specific topic; an analysis of a range of papers for a new or different attribute.
- Inductive reasoning: a logical process of reasoning used to develop more general rules from specific observations; it moves from the specific to the more generalised.
- Epistemology: theories of knowledge which may underpin academic disciplines, particularly relating to their methods and validation.
- Causal relationship: a relationship between variables where movements in one or more variable(s) are held to cause changes in the other(s).
theory, concept, operationalize, variables, hypothesis, and sample
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Rules of Academic Writing
What do you think are the features of research writing?
formal
objective
impersonal
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOOD WRITING

1. Each pronoun should agree with their antecedent.
2. Just between you and I, case is important.
3. A preposition is a poor word to end a sentence with.
4. Verbs has to agree with their subject.
5. Don’t use no double negatives.
6. Remember to never split an infinitive.
7. Avoid clichés like the plague.
8. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
9. Do not use hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it effectively.
10. About sentence fragments.
Singular and Plural

Do you write “The data is...” or “The data are...”?

Is it singular or plural?

That is a deep philosophical question, actually.
IT DEPENDS ON WHETHER YOU CONSIDER DATA TO BE FACTS (PLURAL) OR INFORMATION (WHICH IS SINGULAR).

IT'S A FASCINATING GRAMMATICAL CONUNDRUM.

WHAT IF I ONLY HAVE ONE DATA POINT?

THEN YOU HAVE BIGGER PROBLEMS THAN GRAMMAR.
TENSE IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

Present and Past Tense

Abstract should be in the past tense, because you are referring to your own results.

The materials and methods and the results sections should be in the past tense, as you describe what you did and what you found.

Introduction and Discussion should be in the present tense, because these sections often emphasize previously established knowledge.
Exceptions

Present Tense - Results of calculations and statistical analysis even though statements about the objects to which they refer are in the past tense; for example, “These values are significantly greater than those of the females of the same age, indicating that the males grew more rapidly.”

It is correct to say, “Smith (9) showed that streptomycin inhibits S. nocolor.” It is also correct to say, “Table 4 shows that streptomycin inhibited S. everycolor at all pH levels.”
### Activity 1 - Match the informal vocabulary in the list below with the more appropriate formal options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Look at</th>
<th>Demonstrate, indicate, illustrate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go over</td>
<td>A great deal of, many, an abundance of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show</td>
<td>Confirm, determine, verify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin</td>
<td>Solve, repair, amend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Consider, monitor, analyse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of</td>
<td>Commence, initiate, undertake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit</td>
<td>Revise, review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix</td>
<td>Somewhat, fairly, quite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure</td>
<td>Satisfactory, positive, favourable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2

Identify instances of informal language in the text below.

These results are really quite good. The model fits very well with the data points, as indicated by the $R^2$ values of 0.32 shown in Table 1 above. But the method used to obtain the best values for $a$, $b$, and $c$ wasn't efficient as it involved putting lots of values into an Excel spreadsheet over and over to try and get the lowest $R^2$ value.
Using passive voice:

‘We administered the questionnaire...’ (active voice)

‘The questionnaire was administered...’ (passive voice)

Using third person:

‘I discovered that…’ becomes ‘Research reveals that…’

‘We can see that….’ becomes ‘It is evident that…’

Making things rather than people the subject of sentences:

‘I show...’ becomes ‘The report shows...’

‘I interpret the results as...’ becomes ‘The results indicate...’
Impersonal Writing

These are some ways of limiting the use of ‘I’ and ‘we’ in academic writing.

1. I surveyed the literature and discovered...

2. We used a standard graphical representation to...

3. We researched the question of...

   A standard graphical representation was used...

   A survey of the literature revealed that...

   The question of...was researched...
Dividing up long sentences

Example

ORIGINAL The seeds, sterilised for 3 min. in NaOCl (1% available chlorine) and rinsed with distilled water, were germinated on moist filter paper (Whatman No. 2) in Petri dishes and grown in the dark at 23 °C till 72 hours.

REVISED

The seeds were sterilised for 3 min. in NaOCl (1% available chlorine), and rinsed with distilled water. They were then germinated on moist filter paper (Whatman No. 2) in Petri dishes and grown in the dark at 23 °C.
Paraphrasing by changing the parts of speech
Active to passive
Complex to Compound
Using tentative language
Tentative language therefore plays an important role in presenting a convincing argument or claim. You should indicate:

- your level of confidence in your conclusions
- the strength of the evidence on which you are basing your claims

Consider the differences between the two sentences below:

- Diet **was** an important factor in the health of the respondents.
- The evidence **suggests that** diet was an important factor in the health of the respondents.
Hedging Language

Verbs
- Appear
- Suggest
- Indicate

Modals
- may/might
- can/could
- will/would

Adverbs
- Possibly
- Probably
- Likely
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Ways to Engage and Enhance
How can researchers work on their Academic English?

- Attend a MOOC
- Read research papers
- Practice research writing exercises
- Jot down from Academic Phrase banks
- Blogs, Podcasts, etc.
IELTS Academic Test Preparation

The University of Queensland, Australia

Restrictions: None

Price: Free

Duration: Eight Weeks
English for Academic Study

Coventry University
Restrictions: None
Price: Free
Duration: Four Weeks
Academic Writing

University of Edinburgh (Advanced)

Restrictions: None
Price: Free
The Academic Phrasebank is a general resource for academic writers. It makes explicit the more common phraseological ‘nuts and bolts’ of academic writing.

Academic Phrasebank

A compendium of commonly used phrasal elements in academic English in PDF format
2014b edition

Dr John Morley
Talks

Things about a PhD nobody told you about | Laura Valadez-Martinez | TED...

1.6M views · 5y ago

43K

TEDx Talks
34.4M subscribers
RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS

- https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-englishcomp2kscopemaster/chapter/what-is-research-writing/
- Understanding Research A Consumer’s Guide Vicki L. Plano Clark John W. Creswell
- Amanda Graham, "Coming to Grips with Reading and Writing Academic Articles", http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/~agraham/guides/guidec.shtml
THANK YOU

Questions?