



MASARYK UNIVERSITY Language Centre



POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

SESSION 1

1. WELCOME

- Structure and style of course: six seminar blocks – discussion, writing, correction of errors in spoken and written English.
- Dates / times of the seminars: 31/10 at 16.50, 14/10 at 14.10, 21/10 at 14.10, 28/10 at 17.20, 05/11 at 0800, 12/12 at 14.10. All in this room.
- Assignments and Assessment:
 - There will be homework tasks after each seminar aimed at improving your writing, presentation skills and general English academic vocabulary.
 - There will be a final written assignment which will contribute to a significant proportion of the assessment.
- Attendance: Need to attend and actively participate in the seminars, complete homework tasks.
- What are you hoping to get from the course?

Aims:

- to present basic principles of academic writing in the context of postgraduate studies
- to practice and peer review writing
- to engage postgraduate students in discussion of issues in academic writing

2. INTRODUCTION

*** Work in pairs. Find a person you don't know and introduce yourselves to each other.**

Feel free to take notes as you will be asked to introduce that person (name; dept.; research area) to the whole group. Find out about the other persons research, their topic and academic interests....etc.

(John Morgan, 2007)

3. WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?

*** Discuss your thoughts with the class.**

<u>Who?</u> <i>Who is writing?</i> <i>Who is the audience?</i>	<u>What?</u> <i>What is the writing about?</i>	<u>Why?</u> <i>Why is the writing done?</i>

4. WHAT IS POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING? * Discuss in pairs, feedback to the group.

What are the major differences between undergraduate and postgraduate academic writing?

5. FEATURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

*** Discuss with the group.**

Look at the terms below. What do they mean in the context of academic writing?

Complexity:

Formality:

Precision:

Objectivity:

Explicitness:

Accuracy:

Hedging:

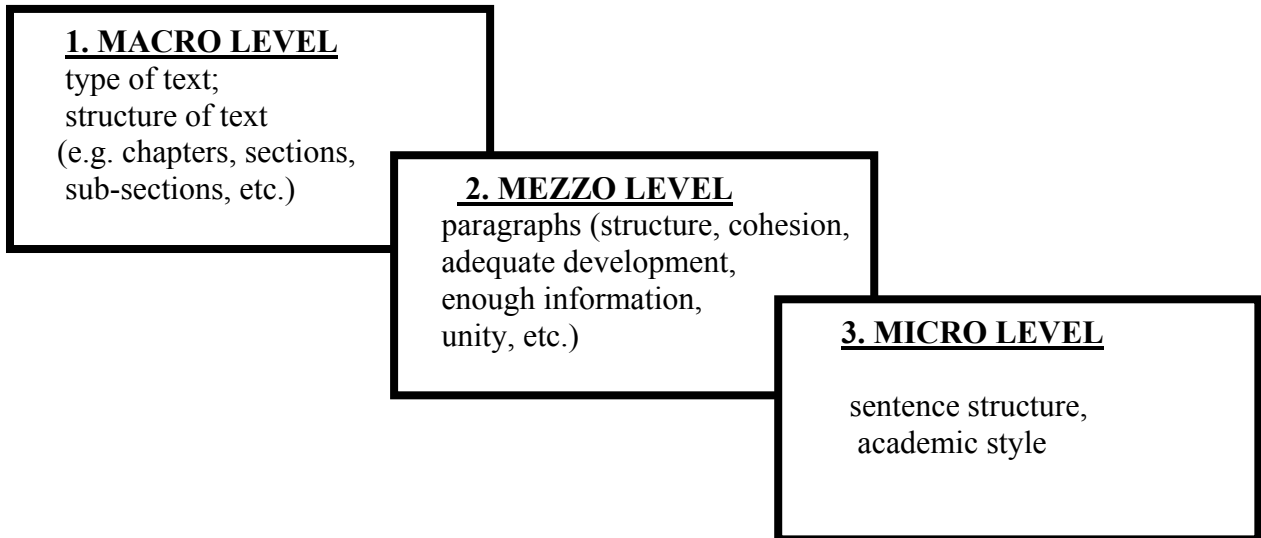
Responsibility:

Organisation:

Some other features of academic writing to consider: You should be technically correct, original and compelling, have a clear topic when starting the research, use the best sources, avoid plagiarism, take

notes, be persuasive, write drafts, use quotes, citations and paraphrasing, use specific format, perfect your final draft.

6. POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING THEORY



(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

7. STYLE

7.1.

*** Look at these three different styles of writing. What do you notice about the statements? What is the academic style? Discuss with the class.**

1. Beaut weather mate!
2. What a splendiferous day.
3. Evidence from the Bureau of Meteorology indicates that a temperature of approximately 25 degrees is expected.

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

7.2.

In the following examples, the same message is expressed in six different styles, from an extremely formal written style, to the very informal spoken one.

*** Work in pairs/small groups: Match the sentences with the styles, then discuss with the group.**

- a) Jargon, very formal.
- b) Written, formal, clear.

- c) Written style for the general public (scripted radio or TV news style).
- d) Formal spoken style (seminar, talk).
- e) Informal spoken style (discussion).
- f) Very informal spoken style (chat).

1. As the value of Sterling increased compared to other currencies, the government was forced to take tax measures to head off a rapid increase in consumer spending spurred on by cheaper imports.
2. And you see, Sterling got more and more valuable, so as a result, the government had to go round putting up taxes, you see, to stop everyone going out and splashing out, spending all their money on cheap imports.
3. Consequent to the appreciation in the exchange value of Sterling against other currencies, necessary fiscal measures were introduced by the government in order to reduce the likelihood of an import-led consumer spending surge.
4. As Sterling went up in value, the government had to put up taxes to stop consumers splashing out on too many cheap imports.
5. As Sterling's international value went up, the government had to take tax measures to head off a consumer spending boom spurred on by cheaper imports.
6. After the international value of Sterling rose, the government was obliged to take fiscal measures to reduce the likelihood of a surge in consumer spending led by cheaper imports.

(Adapted from: <http://website.lineone.net/~eshp/styles.htm>)

7.3.

Examine the following texts and identify any significant features. *** Work in pairs: Note down the type of text and how the language is different between them. Then discuss with the group.**

TEXT 1

*Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with:
"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."
"We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."*

TEXT 2

CAUTION - **Never** use cloth or paper products (paper towels, tissue paper, etc.) to clean the lenses. They will scratch the coating and decrease the resolving power of the lens. Use only **lens paper**.

- Switch the microscope to the lowest magnification or raise the objectives from the stage before inserting a slide. This will prevent the objective lens from being accidentally scratched by the slide.
- Place the slide to be viewed on the stage and center the specimen over the opening.
- Begin with either the scanning lens or the low power objective lens.
- Raise the stage (or lower the lens) all the way so that the slide is as close as possible to the objective lens.
- Use the coarse adjustment knob to slowly raise the lens from the stage while viewing the image. Fine focusing is not needed when using the lowest magnification (scanning or 4X objective). If you are using any of the other objectives, it will be necessary to use the fine focus after using the coarse focus.
- Adjust the condenser so that a sharp focus is produced. This step is important at the highest magnification (oil immersion or 1000X).
- Adjust the iris diaphragm. This will need readjustment after changing to a different magnification.

TEXT 3

The aim is to develop transferable communication skills in English through an interactive learning infrastructure. It will link academic and non-academic worlds, provide opportunities for training and retraining and reflect the needs of practice.

The programme objectives will be achieved by setting up and running virtual transnational (between Wales, Czech Republic, Spain, Bosnia and Turkey) and transversal (between academic and professional) study circles:

- by developing training and learning materials for academic and professional purposes;
- by making effective use of advanced technological resources for authentic communication tasks (videoconferencing, internet);
- by creating an internationally accessible virtual learning environment (through development and use of an open subject village web site and by matching the academic outcomes with the needs of prospective employees.

It will also create opportunities for further training and retraining in transnational communication for professionals, in practicing essential and desirable skills in interviews, providing space for the development of equal opportunities communication.

This project makes an original contribution to intercultural communication in English language teaching and also to national vocational training by introducing advanced technology that brings together people from professional working environments and the academic world. Effective use of advanced technology and acquisition of necessary skills can open doors to a united Europe and reduce obstacles to communication and cooperation in terms of geographical distance and work.

TEXT 4

This paper examines interaction in written text through the interplay between the notions of text averral and attribution (Sinclair, 1988). Text averral is evidenced in the unmarked parts of the text, where the utterances are assumed to be attributed to the author. Attribution, the counterpart of text averral, is the marked case where the sources of authority are clearly signalled.

It is hoped that this study will add to our knowledge about the characteristics of different types of text, and illuminate the way for students who find themselves lost amidst the echoes of the multiple voices they hear within the same text.

Text averral and attribution are basic notions for the organization of interaction in written

text. The assumption is made that the author of a non-fictional artefact (Sinclair, 1986) avers every statement in his or her text so long as he/she does not attribute these statements to another source - whether that source is other or self. Aversion is manifested in various ways in the text - negatively, through absence of attribution, and positively, through commenting, evaluating or metastructuring of the discourse. Attribution, on the other hand, is signalled in the text by a number of devices of which reporting is an obvious one.

TEXT 5

Stem cells trial for MS patients

Jane McSaley

A new treatment for multiple sclerosis (MS) is being pioneered near Bristol. Six patients at Frenchay Hospital are being injected with their own stem cells in the hope that they will repair damage to the brain.

Approximately 60,000 people in the UK suffer from MS, an incurable disease of the nervous system.

Prof Neil Scolding, of the Institute of Clinical Neurosciences, said: "We know stem cells are attracted into the brain, into these areas of damage."

He added that he hoped the stem cells would "help those areas to stop getting worse" and "repair damage".

'Lot of hope'

Liz Allison, an MS patient taking part in the trial, said: "I'm hoping there will be some improvement."

BBC health correspondent Matthew Hill said: "We've already seen stem cells used on cardiac patients but this is the first time a reputable organisation has tried it out on MS patients."

"There is a lot of hope riding on these trials but it is very early days yet."

He added that it was likely to be several months before any conclusions could be drawn regarding the treatment.

TEXT 6

Hi Paul,

I am finally back in the office after a gruelling week at the hospital. I am trying to catch-up on things so will talk to Alison today about VC this Wed. I am not sure which venue as Steve mentioned something about Room 2 not being available. I will try and let you know about what we have decided to do with the students - apart from the left over stuff do you think we will have time for more?

Cheers,
Kate

TEXT 7

About Amnesty International

As a movement of ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights, our purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.



[Find out more](#) | [vision and mission](#) | [history](#) | [governance](#) | [finances](#) | [jobs](#) | [volunteer](#)

(Adapted from: 1. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*: <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext98/pandp12.txt>; 2. www.sherline.com/2125Inst.htm + <http://faculty.clintoncc.suny.edu/faculty/Michael.Gregory/files/Bio%20101/Bio%20101%20Laboratory/Microscopy/Microscopy%20lab.htm>;
3. Katrňáková H. et al.: 2005: CJV Leonardo da Vinci project application, unpublished draft; 4. UEFAP: <http://www.uefap.com/writing/feature/intro.htm>;
5. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/7014813.stm>; 7. <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10010>)

8. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

** For each of the following words, write a definition / meaning and use it in a sentence:*

advocate:

deduce:

infer:

complement:

comprehensive:

empirical:

ambiguous:

deviate:

distort:

predominant:

sequence:

incidence:

(Adapted from McCarthy and O'Dell, English Vocabulary in Use, 2003)

HOMEWORK TASK:

* Research / look up 3 examples of useful academic words that you think might be useful when writing-up a (or your) research project. Write down a sentence each for the meaning and an example of the word used in context.

* We will share and peer review this vocabulary next seminar.