



MASARYK UNIVERSITY
Dept. of Foreign Languages



POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

SESSION 6

- Please bring the notes from seminar 5 so that we can look at:

- structure of paragraphs

- text cohesion (cohesion within paragraphs, example paragraphs to review)

- Please give me / send me any outstanding seminar and homework material.

- This is necessary to demonstrate that you have covered all the course material. You can either provide me hard copies or send to me on email. **Deadline: end of December.**

- Homework and Final Assignment:

Prepare a written text of 1000 – 1500 words.

Choose a topic that is most relevant for you and your research work.

The type of text can be anything you would find useful to have feedback on and could include: a research proposal, scientific article or a section of one (eg introduction and literature review, discussion and conclusions, abstract plus another section...etc) section of a thesis, etc.

Deadline for completion: 19th December. Please give **hard copy or email to Alex Floyd** by then.

1. Paragraph Development - Comparing and Contrasting

* *Read and discuss with the class group:*

PROCESS:

- ▶ **DECIDE:** **compare** them (emphasise the similarities) **contrast** them (emphasise the differences)
- ▶ If you write a paragraph emphasizing the similarities between two subjects, you must also discuss at least one difference, and vice versa.
- ▶ The opening sentence of comparison/contrast often states that the two subjects are similar/different enough to be compared/contrasted.
- ▶ **DECIDE:** **BLOCK FORMAT** individual items being compared or contrasted in a complex way, listing all the points for one item or element of comparison or contrast, and then listing all the points for the other item or element of comparison or contrast)

SEPARATING FORMAT each point with examples from both items or elements being compared or contrasted
- ▶ The summary sentence in a comparison/contrast paragraph either presents a conclusion based on the information given or restates the purpose of comparison and contrast.

Useful Phrases to Compare and Contrast

COMPARING

X is like Y
 X is similar to Y
 X is comparable to Y
 X is as ... as Y
 X resembles Y in many ways
 X parallels Y in some ways
 X is not quite as... as Y.
X is not exactly→ entirely→ quite **the same as / like** Y.

CONTRASTING

X is unlike Y
 X is different from Y
 X differs from Y to some extent in that...
 Unlike X, Y is

In contrast to X, Y is
 Compared to X, Y is ... (In comparison to X, Y is)
 X and Y are different / dissimilar in every way / respect.
X is totally→ completely→ entirely→ quite **different from Y.**

X is exactly→ precisely→ very much→ (quite) a lot → rather→ somewhat→ a little → slightly→ scarcely→ hardly→ only just→ not at all **like Y.**

X is exactly→ precisely→ just→ virtually→ practically→ more or less→ almost→ nearly→ about **the same as Y.**

(Adapted from: Malovičová, I. et al.:2005 English For Academic Purposes, CJV MU)

1.1. Read and analyse the comparing / contrasting paragraphs below

*** In pairs, discuss the style / format of compare / contrast used in each paragraph:**

A. Although the interpretation of traffic signals may seem highly standardized, close observation reveals regional variations across this country, distinguishing the East Coast from Central Canada and the West as surely as dominant dialects or political inclinations. In Montreal, a flashing red traffic light instructs drivers to careen even more wildly through intersections heavily populated with pedestrians and oncoming vehicles. In startling contrast, an amber light in Calgary warns drivers to scream to a halt on the off chance that there might be a pedestrian within 500 meters who might consider crossing at some unspecified time within the current day. In my home town in New Brunswick, finally, traffic lights (along with painted lines and posted speed limits) do not apply to tractors, all terrain vehicles, or pickup trucks, which together account for most vehicles on the road. In fact, were any observant Canadian dropped from an alien space vessel at an unspecified intersection anywhere in this vast land, he or she could almost certainly orient him-or-herself according to the surrounding traffic patterns.

(<http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/parunif.html>)

B. Although individual authors have individual styles and may deviate from writing conventions of a particular language culture, it is possible to outline certain different tendencies in both the organization and the lexical and grammatical structures of texts written in English and in Czech. These tendencies suggest that Anglophone and Czech writers have different priorities and focus on different aspects of writing.

The main focus of Anglophone authors is to make the reader understand a certain theory or problem. Authors try to present their ideas as clearly as possible and in a way which requires least effort on the part of the reader. They organize their text carefully, and select lexical and grammatical means that allow a smooth comprehension of the relationships between phenomena described in the text. Anglophone authors assume responsibility for the readers' comprehension of the presented material; their texts are primarily oriented towards the reader.

The main focus of most Czech authors, in contrast, is to present a certain theory or problem in all its complexity. They therefore often employ complex syntactic structures capable of covering as many details of the theory as possible. Czech authors anticipate potential queries and try to answer them in advance or to present their findings through less assertive, 'modalized' formulations, suggesting that a different interpretation of the phenomenon in question is possible. Smooth comprehension of the text is not the writer's main priority. Authors pay less attention to organizing their texts in a logical way and sometimes obscure their message by excessive lexical variation. The responsibility for decoding the message is assigned to the reader. Czech academic texts are primarily oriented towards the topic.

(Adapted from: Chamonikolasová, J.:<http://www.phil.muni.cz/stylistika/studie/comparing.doc>)

2. Coherence Among Paragraphs

Read the following text and divide it into logical paragraphs (each paragraph should develop a particular theme.)

*** Work in pairs, then discuss with the group:**

How to Stop Yourself Snoring

Snoring is caused when the airway at the back of the nose and throat becomes partially obstructed. This is usually due to the loosening of the surrounding oropharyngeal muscles, but the reasons why this should occur are varied. The most common are smoking, obesity and the consumption of relaxants such as alcohol and sleeping pills. As with any common ailment, there are a host of "miracle" cures advertised - but you should first try a few simple steps to see if you can halt the snoring before adopting more drastic measures. Lifestyle changes can be the most effective. If you are overweight, a loss of weight will help to reduce the pressure on your neck. You should also stop smoking and try not to drink alcohol at least four hours before you go to bed. Beyond this, try to change your regular sleeping position. Raise the head of your bed with a brick, or tie something uncomfortable into the back of your pyjamas to encourage you to sleep on your side. Both of these will help to alter the angle of your throat as you sleep, and may thus make breathing easier for you. It is also important to keep your nasal passage clear and unblocked. Allergies, colds and hay fever can temporarily cause you to snore; nasal decongestants may help, but you are not advised to use such remedies for long periods. Nasal strips, as worn by sportspeople, have been proven to reduce nasal airway resistance by up to 30 per cent, so consider these as a long-term alternative. If this fails, then you may wish to look at the varied snoring aids that are on the market. They range from neck collars that stop your neck tilting, through to mandibular-advancement devices (such as gumshields) which reduce upper airway resistance, and tongue-retaining devices. You can also buy essential-oil products that are added to warm water and infused or consumed before bedtime. They claim to tone up your palate and unblock your nasal passage. Finally, if your symptoms persist, visit your GP or contact the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association (01737 557 997) for advice. If you do not, your partner might.

(Source: Irving, M.: *Esquire*, March 1999 in <http://www.uefap.com/writing/exercise/parag/paragex1.htm>)

3. Discussing Findings and Results

A research project is often concerned with establishing cause and effect of different phenomena. During the results and discussion sections of an academic piece of writing, it may well be relevant to discuss these factors. Here is some more vocabulary that can assist in this process.

**** With a partner, discuss the meaning of each of the following verbs:***

influence	determine
facilitate	provoke
trigger	account for
springs / stems from	gave rise...
stimulated	generated
induced	inhibited
derived from	motivates

*** Use one or more of the above verbs to replace the underlined word in each of the following sentences:**

*** Change the sentence structure if needed, not the meaning, think about the correct tense:**

Our research investigated why eating chocolate causes headaches in some people.

Edward's recent article has caused a great deal of debate among biologists.

The medicine caused headaches and other side effects in several subjects during testing.

Having an end of semester prize helps students to perform well during the year.

Intensive farming has been a significant factor in habitat destruction and the decline of different bird species.

The missile test got an immediate and strong response from the US government and world media.

Astrologists believe that people's lives are largely affected by the planets and stars.

The dam affects the flow of water into the region to prevent flooding in the rainy season.

A leak in the fuel tank explained 40% of the fuel loss, however further loss could not be explained.

The renovated buildings have broader doors and corridors to make the use of wheelchairs easier.

The government has cut taxes in an attempt to affect the poorly performing economy during these difficult economic times.

Britain has received many economic benefits from being a member of the EU, however some of these may have been forgotten when the British people voted in the referendum.

(Pg 69 Academic Vocabulary in Use, McCarthy and Odell, 2008, CUP)

3.1 Changes in structure

Changing the grammatical structure of a sentence can help you to paraphrase effectively. To make these changes, you may need to change a conjunction, use a participle (-ing form), change a modal word, etc.

*** Rewrite each sentence, following the instructions in brackets.**

1. Psychologists have yet to study the effects of the very long-term use of computer games. (*use a passive form*)

2. Religious people tend to be more optimistic than non-believers. (*use as*)
3. Back pain will probably become more common in the future as the posture of people is getting worse. (*use likely*)
4. Despite their many advantages, alternative methods of teaching have some drawbacks. (*use although*)
5. Data loss may occur while the virus is being eliminated. (*use possible*)
6. Long-term exposure to radiation can cause cancer. (*use result from*)
7. Before she published her groundbreaking study, Norton worked as a lecturer in sports psychology. (*use –ing form*)

(adapted from Paterson, K. *Oxford Grammar for EAP*. Oxford University Press, 2013.)

4. Evidence and Reference

*** Read and discuss with the class group:**

Evidence is the support for your statements and opinions from other sources. The quality of your evidence is in fact more important than your opinions. Without evidence your work does not belong in an academic environment.

If you are doing primary research you use your own data as the most important evidence. However in most academic papers this is usually done by placing your own work in the context of other academic work. At the end of longer papers you will use references and perhaps appendices to support your paper.

Which are the most common ways of referencing? notes, figures, citations, quotes, reference list, tables, pictures.

(Adapted from: <http://vlc.polyu.edu.hk/AcademicWriter/Paragraphs/paragraph.htm>)

4.1. Which statements below should be referenced when used in academic writing? Why?

*** Read and discuss the below examples in pairs, then share your comments with the group:**

1) Academic environmental scientists and those employed by NGOs arguably give more credence to the supposed human health risks associated with organo-phosphate pesticides than do scientists working for government departments or 'industry' research organisations.

2) Some scholars document the importance of music in old people's institutions. "We propose the development of a new branch of diagnosis and therapy offering music as a replacement for lost language, and using music to assess type and depth of loss, the progression of loss in disease, and as a prognostic indicator following injury".

3) Although the majority of children who were born preterm are nowadays free of major a handicap (i.e. cerebral palsy or mental retardation) 25% to 50% of these infants exhibit milder neuromotor, sensory, cognitive or behavioural deficits.

4) The analogy between the philosophical method of Socrates (irony, aporia) and the practical skills of the trickster in Indian mythology are substantial.

5) To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, as Newton found out, but so many writers forget this and it is so critical and basic to any story.

6) The immortal line "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" can be used to describe e.g. corruption or a situation in which something is wrong in a country.

7) The European Union currently has twenty-seven member states.

(Adapted from: <http://www.greenwich.ac.uk/~bj61/talessi/tlr5.html>, <http://www.amypadgett.com/2007/05/to-every-action-there-is-equal-and.html>; <http://renew.com/general59/weu.htm>, <http://www.whale.to/m/quotes26.html>; Czechóova, K.2005, p.6)

Reference styles:

APA: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

MLA: http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/mla.html

5. Text Types

*** Match the following sentences with the text types. * Discuss with the group**

1. TEXTBOOK 2. JOURNAL ARTICLE 3. MAGAZINE ARTICLE 4. DOCTORAL THESIS

- a) The text is probably a quality piece of work and can be of great interest to the academic community, however, it is usually not very easy to make it publishable.
- b) The authors of the text are paid by the publishing company to write about what somebody else is doing in a style suitable for general but targeted audience.
- c) Its purpose is to distribute highly specific knowledge to experts and students.
- d) It is a publication produced according to the demand of educational institutions.
- e) Its purpose is to make money by supplying a platform to advertisers who want to reach a particular audience.
- f) The text is reviewed before published by a peer review board or a panel of experts that decides which submissions can be identified as trustworthy sources and are acceptable for publication.
- g) This is a long text where the author provides detailed evidence and justification regarding what was or was not done, or considered, in a research project in order to back up the ultimate conclusions that are offered.
- h) It is a publication used for the formal study of any branch of study.

(Adapted from: <http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic/sources/journals/index.html>; Robert Q. Pollard Jr. 2005; http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic/sources/journals/vs_magazines.htm; <http://gradpsych.apags.org/mar06/dissertation.html>)

5.1. What is the structure of an academic text?

What parts do academic texts usually consist of? What are the basic/ “compulsory” parts of every academic text? *** Discuss with the class group**

Look at the jumbled contents of a thesis below. What should the correct order of the individual parts of a thesis be? *** Discuss in pairs and number in the logical order**

Appendices

Abbreviations

Discussion

Conclusion

References

Methodology

Table of Contents

Introduction

Title Page

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Results

Structuring your own thesis

*** Outline a working description of the structure of your own thesis using the guide below:**

The Story of a Thesis:

The situation my research field is the following: _____, therefore I study _____ (background information: Chapter 1 – introduction)

This is important because _____ (main issue: Chapter 1 – introduction)

So I intend to _____ (aims: Chapter 1 – Introduction)

Researchers believe/used to believe that this issue _____ (Chapter 2 – literature review, or first part of subsequent parallel chapters)

But I think that _____ (review of aims: Chapter 3 – methodology, or second part of subsequent parallel chapters: argumentative evidence may be integrated to some extent within the literature review)

So I use this method/theory to do some research _____ (Chapter 3 – methodology, continuing second part of parallel chapters)

And I have found that (my) argument suggests that _____ (Chapter 4 – results, or 3rd part of parallel chapters)

This means that _____ (Chapter 5 – discussion, or 4th part of parallel chapters)

At this stage, depending on how many chapters you plan to write, it may be useful to include an overall discussion/analysis chapter to tie together previous parallel chapters.

Overall, this is important because _____ (Chapter 6 – conclusion, or whatever your final chapter number is)

But I would still recommend that _____ (Chapter 6 – conclusion, or final chapter)

(Source: Adapted from <http://www2.ems.uq.edu.au/phdweb/phfaq02.html> in Morgan, J., 2007)