

# **Clause Complexing Systems of Chinese Students' Academic Writings**

## **ESSE 16 Abstract**

As a major English linguistics topic, clause complexity has received wide attention from linguists and language researchers. It is argued that an ability to write complex clauses is required for advanced non-native writers of English. As proposed by Halliday (1994: 216), a sentence can be interpreted as a clause complex: a head clause together with other clauses that modify it and he therefore investigated “how clauses are linked to one another by means of some kind of logico-semantic relation to form clause complexes”(2008: 363). This research analyzes different clause complexes in academic texts written by Chinese university students based on the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Academic Writing theories both qualitatively and quantitatively. A basis of 5 million word corpus collected by our team from academic research papers of Top 10 Chinese university students is selected. As especially English major students write their theses in English, these theses including BA theses, MA theses and PhD papers are downloaded from websites like CNKI. Software like AntConc, UAM Corpus Tool, SysFan, etc. are used to quantitatively analyze clause complexing details in chosen data in order to answer questions like: How are logico-semantic types (projection and expansion) realized and how do they work in clause complexes in chosen texts. The first results of this research suggest the trend of developments of students' using semantic and taxis (parataxis and hypotaxis) relations in writing their academic papers that logico-semantic types are used more regularly in PhD papers while taxis are used more often in BA and MA theses, thus to give advice to advanced non-native writers of English. The aim of this project is also to empower teachers to apply SFG to academic writing classes.

**Keywords: Academic Writing, Systemic Functional Grammar, Clause Complexing System, Corpus Analysis**