Principles of Academic Writing

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1. Introduction
1.1. “rhetorical consciousness raising”

- analysis (e.g. ChemCorpus, ZAMA Corpus)
- achievement (transparency in marking)
- awareness (you need to know the rules you break)
- adoption? (discipline convention vs. writer identity)

(adapted from Swales/Feak 2012:iX)
1.2. Project ideas

- exchange views and experiences on academic writing among teachers and students from different national backgrounds
- teachers serve as resource persons – students learn from each other

3 steps:

- April Skopje workshop: coordinators/teachers discuss to provide the frame: needs analysis, liaison with other partners, exchange of materials
  summer school: time, place, participant selection, slot allocation for groups

- July Chemnitz workshop+conference: coordinators do research and present it in a conference

- August Ohrid summer school: all participants=students+teachers contribute what they can to the discussion
1.3. Summer School expectations

- participants agree on what they can offer to each other
- teachers coordinate their national groups
- students learn from each other
- students present their own experience, i.e. more what they have really done in writing their BA thesis than what they we told to do
- more discussion/interaction than presentation
- participants discuss conventions:
  “the text must be made accessible for the reader” (adaptation)
  vs.
  “the text must reflect the complexity of the subject” (iconicity)
- diversity=differences between disciplines:
  natural sciences – social sciences – humanities/arts
1.4. Discourses in Academic English

- research discourse
- instructional discourse
- popular discourse
- student discourse

new focus: student2student
1.5. Future project ideas?

- web portal with resources:
  - guidelines
  - models
  - data for analyses
  - joint publication (down-loadable for free)

- MA/PhD research stays at Chemnitz in Germany → send me a CV/resume with a preliminary proposal by Friday!

- traineeships/internships in SE universities

- e-learning?
2. Key Concepts

2.1. convention vs. individuality
2.2. reader-/listener-orientation,
   argumentation structure,
   discourse management
2.3. genre
2.4. meta-language:
   author-involvement, -commitment (hedging)

all to be illustrated in following presentations and discussions
3. Texts as database

3.1. Corpora combine theory and practice
different writing corpora for comparison:

- ChemCorpus (concrete learner-related)
  - Magister Theses
  - Magister Written (timed exam)
  - BA Theses
  - MA Theses
  - Reports?
- SPACE Corpus (Specialised+Popular same topic)
- ZAMA (from South Africa, well stratified)
- CamAcCorpus
- GhanaAcCorpus
- Brno Corpus (Czech mother-tongue; compatible to Macedonian?)
- TürkCorpus
- SEEurop. Corpus? (Macedonian/Slavonic vs. Albanian?)
3.2. A genre approach to academic discourses

**research “output”**
- research article
  - book reviews
  - project proposals
- conference presentations

**science “journalism”**
- popular science articles
  - popular blogs (David Crystal)
  - popular science films (Horizon)
- popular science books

**teacher “talk”/e-learning**
- ppt presentations
  - lectures
  - student presentations
- textbooks
  - Wikis
  - www pages

**student “literacy”**
- fieldwork notes / essays
- MA/BA thesis
- seminar presentations

“Novice Academic English”

**discipline-specific**
culture-specific
Genre Report

Structure of Project Reports:

- executive Summary
- with Gantt chart=time/resource allocation with milestones, incl. class work, group work, individual work
- description of work phases
- problems of individual project phases to reach milestones
- project evaluation (publishable)
- personal addition (unofficial project criticism=not publishable, e.g. on communication misunderstandings)

2 concrete examples
Report: Marking Criteria

In **Project Reports** we use 5 criteria:

- content, incl. "customer satisfaction"
- argumentation, i.e. "inner" logic and cohesive devices
- style, formal (NO *bit, get*, contracted forms, etc.) and convincing metalanguage (esp. author involvement, hedging)
- form, esp. quotes, references, etc. according to MLA (for literature) or APA (for social sciences, linguistics)
- language (in both languages German as well as English there are often idiomatic mistakes)
### 3.3. Common compilation principles + problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>references for comparison:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- ICLE (=International Corpus of Learner English) but: are argumentative essays compatible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ChemCorpus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

opportunities for a SEEurop. Corpus
- comparative: Macedonian/Slavonic vs. Albanian?

problems:
- legal: national language in many departments
- technical: electronic form
2: to produce a Manual that helps students “successfully” write in the following genres

- Research articles
- Theses and dissertations
- Term papers
- Books and monographs
- Conference presentations
- Grant proposals
- Statements of intent
- Research proposals
- Abstracts
wider analyses: form > function

**research articles**
- **novelty** →
  - in lit. review evaluation →
  - stance, hedges, boosters
- **complexity**
  - in ontology lexical hypernyms/hyponyms

**science journalism**
- metaphors
- multimedia with
text/image/sound (??)

**instruction**
- macro-/micro-structuring
- meta-discourse
  - interpersonal
  - attitudinal
  (compare MICESE, BASE)

**student papers**
- argumentation structure
- coherence →
  - cohesion by pronoun chains, clause adv.
  (compare BAVE)
Research question: divergence or diversity?

Research English

Novice English

How much convergence do we want in research English?
How much diversity do we accept in novice English?
Which features do we want to reduce or increase?
3.4. Example of a particularly well stratified corpus: ZAMA Corpus from Stellenbosch

- 150 texts
- gender balanced
- ethnic/language background according to name: English, Afrikaans, (S)African languages, rest (Indian, Chinese, Luo)
- department-stratified: aim 5 (6) MA theses in over 20 disciplines
  - Anthropology
  - Chemistry
  - English (Lit.)
  - Curriculum Studies
  - Geography
  - History
  - Journalism
  - (Gen.) Linguistics
  - Mechanical Engineering
  - Civil Engineering
  - Psychology
  - (Public) Law
  - Political Science
  - etc.
3.5. Example of a “developping” reference corpus: ChemCorpus = Chemnitz U/German student writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>corpus</th>
<th># files</th>
<th># words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Year 2 Term Papers Linguistics CUT</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Theses Linguistics CUT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>143,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magister Exams Linguistics CUT</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>103,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magister Theses Linguistics CUT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>652,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magister Theses Cultural Studies/Literature CUT</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>292,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total CUT</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1,268,358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Sample Analysis ZAMA Corpus: Variation in personal pronoun usage

author involvement: I, me, my
we, us, our

reader address: you, your

semantic differences:
inclusive - exclusive we, pluralis majestatis/modestiae
you as audience - (any)one

eexamples:

„I will now review some of literature relevant to South Africa in order to provide a context for the study.” (ZMA06BA-YE)

„[…] these larger social patterns […] will have to be addressed if we are to curb this phenomenon.” (ZMA08MV-YX)

„Furthermore, you need to ‘comprehend ‘ [what] you’re reading […]” (ZMA10MM-EE)
4.1. Variation in personal pronoun usage (normalised, per 10,000 words) presented in tables and figures to discover “decisive” variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>female</th>
<th>male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st sing</td>
<td>6105</td>
<td>2112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pl</td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd sing</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>SAfrLang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st sing</td>
<td>2540</td>
<td>6934</td>
<td>2867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pl</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd sing</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>3930</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1. Variation in personal pronoun usage by gender

relative/1M words and by 4 functional categories

- Introduction
- Key concepts
- Texts
- Analysis
- Conclusion

Bar chart showing variation in personal pronoun usage by gender, with categories for 1st singular, 1st plural, 2nd singular, and 3rd person.
4.1. Variation in personal pronoun usage by language

relative/1M words and by 4 functional categories
### 4.2. Variation in personal pronoun usage by discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anth</th>
<th>Chem</th>
<th>EngLit</th>
<th>Geo</th>
<th>Hist</th>
<th>Jour</th>
<th>Ling</th>
<th>MechE</th>
<th>CivE</th>
<th>Pol</th>
<th>Curr</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Psych</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st s.</td>
<td>4272</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>9695</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td>5989</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>5998</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>11212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pl</td>
<td>1355</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>1710</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1179</td>
<td>1337</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pl</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6163</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>3409</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1319</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ discipline has the most obvious influence (visualised in Fig. 4.2 below), but we have to calculate diligently and use significance tests.
4.2. Variation in personal pronoun usage by discipline

![Graph showing variation in personal pronoun usage by discipline]
5. Conclusion: combine research + teaching - in cooperation?

all students need AcWriting skills today because the expectations have become higher (genre conventions stricter)
some students (language specialists) can write about AcWriting and use what they have learnt and researched their own writing

research principles:
- variation depends on may interrelated variables
- hypothesis: discipline culture > gender/language culture
- analysis needs hard data and hard statistical analysis

teaching principles:
Is metalanguage instruction on a functional basis possible?
- “to a different degree”:
  personal pronouns (explicitly categorical = regulated)
  > cohesion (overused through teaching?)
  > modality/hedging (complex, less awareness)
Related reading materials


