

# English complex words and academic writing for research across disciplines

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This paper combines two areas of research: English morphology/ word-formation and English for academic/ research purposes. Morphological investigations primarily serve theoretical goals of general linguistics by providing descriptions of how complex words are constructed and used (Adams 2001; Lieber 2004). Results of morphological research can also serve more practical purposes. Detailed analyses of morphological patterns prevailing across academic disciplines can provide insights into the writing strategies characteristic of these disciplines. Morphological complexity is an evident and intrinsic feature of academic texts. Paradoxically, much of the current research in English for academic purposes (e.g., Biber & Gray 2010; Gardner & Davies 2014) has focused on other matters, ignoring morphologically derived words and their impact on writing for research across disciplines.

Hypothetically, writing for research in specific scholarly disciplines can be, to some extent, differentiated by means of morphological patterns preferred by these disciplines. This is a hypothesis that needs to be tested and confirmed. The initial aim is to spell out morphological patterns which characterize individual scholarly disciplines within social sciences. This corpus-based investigation starts with compiling two “disciplinary” tailor-made corpora containing cleaned research papers (Flowerdew 2015; McEnery & Hardie 2012). The corpora are searched for individual affixed word types and tokens. Then, frequency lists of the most commonly used affixes are compiled for each discipline examined. As a result, the most frequent affixed word types are obtained, providing the most characteristic morphological features of selected disciplines. Syntactic constructions regularly accompanying particular types of derivations are then identified. Once such constructions are established for the disciplines examined, local grammars of sorts, dedicated to particular academic fields, can be designed (Jones & Waller 2015).

Competent academic writing for research across disciplines requires a native-level command of complex lexico-syntactic constructions. The competent and creative use of morphologically complex words in academic writing for research significantly improves the quality of the text. Insights from this empirical investigation should be shared by non-native authors in the first place. This paper examines initial findings of an ongoing project aiming at constructing a few mini-grammars of lexico-syntactic constructions dedicated to individual fields of study within social sciences.

## References:

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