



英文寫作秘訣 013

“the present study”可有任何不妥？

難度：中階

Uni-edit 的英文編輯常常看到自我參照(self-referential)用語 “the present study”，用來表達作者在論文中的自己的研究或相關研究。它不是一個特別的術語，也不具特定主題，在自然科學和社會科學中出現頻率並無差異。大多數亞洲語言都有與之意思一致的對等詞：例如，中文的本研究 (běn yánjiū) 和日語 (hon-kenkyuu)，很容易讓非英語母語人士從其母語直譯。

然而，英語有多種表達方式可以表示本研究。你知道所有的表達方式嗎？

正確使用“the present study”

“the present study” 在論文最常見於“目的陳述”。

例句：The present study investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

(本研究調查成人精神障礙者的個人、環境因素，及與精神病藥物依從性的關係。)

另一個常見的結構是含有介詞，如 “in the present study”。這個詞，儘管可以使用被動語態，但我們仍建議使用第一人稱或主動語態以提高清晰度和簡潔性。

例句：In the present study, we investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

例句：Individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders were investigated in the present study, as well as their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

“the current study”似乎比“the present study”少被使用，但二者意思完全相同，可以互換使用。

例句：The current study investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

英文寫作欠佳：僅使用“the present study”

為什麼不建議只使用“the present study”呢？一直使用“the present study”是沒有語法問題，但存在寫作風格問題。重複使用相同的詞和短語，會被認為英文寫作風格欠佳：一直重複也會讓讀者認為作者無話可說，造成讀者無法聚精會神的閱讀、感到厭煩、困惑，因為讀者難以區分當前資訊與先前資訊。

以下兩種替換選擇有兩個優點：第一是簡明，比“the present study”的表達簡短，尤其適用於摘要。摘要對字數有嚴格要求，下面的例子中，選擇使用任一種替換詞都可以幫你減少字數。

第二個優點是降低標記(Markedness)。標記是一個廣泛的語言概念，在詞彙語境和讀者理解中，閱讀中常被使用的詞通常較不常用的詞句易被理解。因此，適度地減少不必要的複雜語句（例如使用簡單短語就可的情況），能使讀者將精力集中於理解相對複雜主題的特定語言。

順道說明，節省字數和減少標記可藉由使用字母縮寫(acronyms)達成。下面兩個句子哪個更容易閱讀呢？例句 1 還是例句 2？

例句 1 : Researchers from the United States of America are working on using clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats technology to edit segments of deoxyribonucleic acid in an attempt to treat various heart conditions.

(美國的研究人員正在使用 CRISPR 技術來編輯 DNA 片段，以嘗試治療各種心臟病。)

例句 2 : Researchers from the **USA** are working on using **CRISPR** technology to edit segments of **DNA** in an attempt to treat various heart conditions.

替換選擇 1：第一人稱

第一人稱代詞如“we”和“our”是很常見的，它們是低標記用語。通常從“We found”和“Our results show”這樣的用語中可輕易理解指的是本研究。

例句 : The results of the present study demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for rational emotive therapy.

(本研究的結果表明，理性情感治療對女性的療效率較低。)

例句 : **Our** results demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for rational emotive therapy.

但有一個潛在的問題：討論多個研究結果該如何表達呢？“our results”通常可以指當前或之前的多個研究結果。常用詞也可以解決這個問題：“here”可以指當前研究，“previous”或“past”可以表示之前的研究。

例句 : In a **previous** study, we found that rational emotive therapy showed similar efficacy rates regardless of gender. However, our results **here** demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for this treatment.

(在之前的研究中，我們發現不論性別，理性情緒療法的療效率差不多。然而，我們現在的研究結果表明，這種療法對女性的療效率較低。)

替換選擇 2：“this study”

“This study”通常與“the present study”的使用方式相同，您不需特地學習不同的例句型態，就可自然並正確地使用。

例句 : **This study** investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

但是，在談論多項研究比較結果的段落則需特別留意。

例句 : **Our study’s findings corroborate those of Smith et al. (2013), who found that antidepressant compliance depends on several environmental factors, such as living environment. However, this study’s emphasis on one kind of medication means it remains unclear whether other types of medication show the same trend.**

(我們的研究結果證實 Smith 等人於 2013 年的研究結果，他們發現抗抑鬱藥的依從性取決於環境因素，如生活環境，然而本研究著重於探討一種藥物，即仍不清楚其他類型的藥物是否有相同的趨勢。)

在上述例句中，可以看到，當在同一段落中提到多個研究時，“this study”可能產生歧義：作者是要表示“their study”(Smith 等人關注的抗抑鬱藥研究)？還是“the present study”(我們只著重於一種藥物的研究)？

總結

“the present study”具有明確的含義，除學術英語外，很少遇到。作者可以盡然使用該詞表達，但如果一直重複使用，你的寫作會讓人感覺生硬、不自然、難以吸引目光。

以上的替換選擇中，適當地使用更自然和更常見的英語單詞，如“this”或“here”，以增強表達，透過細微差別的運用改善上下文，並提高你對英文讀物中這些常見詞的隱含關係和指稱物件的理解。何不在下一篇研究論文中就學以致用呢？現在就開始吧！

END OF TIP

Uni-edit English Writing Tip 013

What's wrong with “the present study”?

Difficulty: Intermediate

Uni-edit English Editors are accustomed to seeing the self-referential phrase “the present study”, which an author uses in a paper to refer to itself or accompanying research. It's not a particularly technical term, nor is it subject-specific: it appears in the natural sciences and social sciences with equal frequency. Most Asian languages have a word with exactly this meaning: for example, 本研究 in both Chinese (*běn yánjiū*) and Japanese (*hon-kenkyuu*), so it's easy for non-native speakers of English to translate directly from their native language.

However, English has several ways to refer to the present study. Are you confident that you have all of the options in your writer's toolbox already?

Using “the present study” correctly

The phrase “the present study” is most commonly encountered in a paper's purpose statement.

The present study investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

Another common construction is the prepositional phrase “in the present study”. In these cases, we recommend using first person or active voice to enhance clarity and conciseness, although passive voice is also possible.

In the present study, we investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

Individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders were investigated **in the present study**, as well as their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

In addition, the phrase “the current study” seems to be used less frequently than “the present study”, but it is exactly synonymous with it, and therefore you can use it in exactly the same ways.

The current study investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

Only using “the present study” is poor style

So why can't you just use “the present study” all the time? There is no grammatical problem with using “the present study” all the time, but there is a style problem. It is considered poor English style to use the same words and phrases over and over again: readers assume the author is repeating themselves because they have nothing new to say, or they lose focus or get bored or confused because they cannot distinguish the current information from identically worded previous information.

The two options below share two advantages. The first is conciseness. Each option below is shorter than “the present study”. In sections like the Abstract, where word counts are strict, using one of the options below is a simple way to save yourself one or two words at each instance.

The second advantage is reduction of markedness. Markedness is a broad linguistic concept, but in the context of vocabulary and reader comprehension, it means that commonly used words require less mental effort to read than uncommonly used words. Therefore, minimizing your use of unnecessarily complex phrases (i.e., phrases where simple phrases would also suffice) allows readers to focus their energy on understanding subject-matter-specific language, which is often necessarily complex.

Incidentally, saving space and reducing markedness are two of the main reasons for using acronyms. Which sentence is easier to read below: Sentence 1 or Sentence 2?

Sentence 1: Researchers from the United States of America are working on using clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats technology to edit segments of deoxyribonucleic acid in an attempt to treat various heart conditions.

Sentence 2: Researchers from the USA are working on using CRISPR technology to edit segments of DNA in an attempt to treat various heart conditions.

Alternative 1: First person voice

First-person pronouns like “we” and “our” are very common, and so using them creates low markedness. It is usually obvious from phrases like “We found” and “Our results show” that you are referring to the present study.

The results of the present study demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for rational emotive therapy.

Our results demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for rational emotive therapy.

But there's a potential problem: What if you discuss the results of multiple studies you have authored? In this context, "our results" could refer to the results of the present study, or to the results of a previous study.

Common words can serve as a simple solution: "here" for the former case, and "previous" or "past" for the latter case.

In a **previous** study, we found that rational emotive therapy showed similar efficacy rates regardless of gender. However, our results **here** demonstrate that female gender may predict lower continuation rates for this treatment.

Alternative 2: "This study"

"This study" can generally be used in the same ways as "the present study". You don't need to learn different sentence patterns in order to use it naturally and correctly.

This study investigated individual and environmental factors of adults with mental disorders, and their relationships with psychiatric medication compliance.

Be careful, however, in paragraphs where you talk about or compare the results of multiple studies:

Our study's findings corroborate those of Smith et al. (2013), who found that antidepressant compliance depends on several environmental factors, such as living environment. However, **this study's** emphasis on one kind of medication means it remains unclear whether other types of medication show the same trend.

In this case, does the author mean "their study": i.e., Smith et al.'s focus on antidepressants only? Or does the author mean "the present study": i.e., our study's focus on one kind of medication? You can see that "this study" can create ambiguity when you mention multiple studies in the same paragraph.

Summary

The phrase "the present study" has a precise meaning, but it is rarely encountered outside of academic English. By using it, you can be sure that your meaning will be conveyed, but by using it exclusively, your writing will sound stiff, unnatural, and unconvincing.

The alternatives above should give you excellent opportunities to enhance your communication by utilizing more natural and common English words like “this” and “here”. By improving your command of their nuances in this single context, you will likewise improve your unconscious understanding of the implicit relationships and referents of these common words in all English media you read. Why not experiment in your next research paper? There’s no time like the present!

END OF TIP

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