



Uni-Edit 写作技巧 013

“the present study”有何不妥呢？

难度等级：中级

Uni-edit 的英文编辑常常看到自我指涉短语“the present study”，作者在论文中使用来表示本研究或相关研究。它不是一个特别的术语，也不是有特定主题的：在自然科学和社会科学中出现频率相同。大多数亚洲语言都有与之意思一致的对等词。例如，中文中的本研究(běn yánjiū)和日语(hon-kenkyuu)，所以很容易让非英语母语人士从他们的母语直译过来。

然而，英语有多种表达方式可以表示本研究。你确定你知道所有的表达方式吗？

正确使用“the present study”

短语“the present study”在论文的目的陈述中最为常见。

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

(本研究调查成人精神障碍的个人及环境因素，以及他们与精神病药物依从性的关系。)

另一个常见的结构是介词短语“in the present study”。在这种情况下，尽管使用被动语态也是可以的，但我们仍建议使用第一人称或主动语态来提高清晰度和简洁性。

#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.

此外，短语“the current study”似乎比“the present study”更少使用，二者意思完全相同，可以互换使用。

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

仅使用“the present study”：英文写作欠佳

那为什么不能一直使用“the present study”呢？一直使用“the present study”是没有语法问题的，但是有写作风格问题。重复使用相同的词和短语会被认为英文写作风格欠佳：读者会认为作者无话可说，所以在一直重复；读者无法聚精会神的阅读、感到厌烦、困惑，因为当前信息与先前信息没什么不同，难以让读者区分。

以下两种替换选择有两个优点：第一简明，都比“the present study”短。例如在摘要中，摘要对字数有严格要求，下面的例子中，使用任一种替换选择都可以简单的帮你节省一两个词。

第二个优点是减少标记成分。标记是一个广义的语言学概念，在词汇语境和读者理解中，这意味着常用词比不常用的词阅读起来要少费脑筋。因此，最大限度地减少不必要的复杂短语（例如在使用简单短语就够用的情况）能使读者将精力集中在理解相对复杂的主题特定语言。

顺便说一下，节省字数和减少标记成分是使用首字母缩略词的两个主要原因。下面两个句子哪个更容易阅读呢？句 1 还是句 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.

（美国的研究人员正在使用 CRISPR 技术来编辑 DNA 片段，以尝试治疗各种心脏病。）

#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.

替换选择 1：第一人称

第一人称代词如“we”和“our”是很常见的，使用它们是低标记的。通常从“We found”和“Our results show”这样的短语中可以看出，指的是本研究。

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

（本研究的结果表明，理性情感治疗对女性的疗效率较低。）

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

但有一个潜在的问题：如果讨论多个研究结果那该如何呢？在这种情况下，“our results”可以指当前或之前的多个研究结果。

常用词也可以解决这个问题：“here”可以指当前研究，“previous”或“past”可以表示之前的研究。

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，我们发现不论性别，理性情绪疗法的疗效率差不多。然而，我们现在的研究结果表明，这种疗法女性的疗效率较低。)

替换选择 2: “this study”

“This study” 通常与 “the present study” 的使用方式相同，不需要为了自然正确的使用而去刻意学习一些句型。

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

但是，在谈论或比较多项研究结果的段落中需要注意。

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.

(我们的研究结果证实了 Smith 等人 2013 年的研究结果，他们发现抗抑郁药的依从性取决于几个环境因素，如生活环境，然而本研究着重于探讨一种药物，即仍不清楚其他类型的药物是否有相同的趋势。)

在这个例子中，可以看到，当在同一段落中提到多个研究时，“this study”可能产生歧义：作者的意思是“their study”即 Smith 等人只关注抗抑郁药？还是“the present study”即我们的研究只着重于一种药物？

总结

短语“the present study”具有明确的含义，但在学术英语之外很少遇到。通过使用可以表达作者之意，但如果一直重复使用这一个词，你的写作会让人感觉生硬、不自然、难引人注目。

以上的替换选择中，通过使用更自然和更常见的英语单词，如“this”和“here”，以增强表达。通过改善上下文中对他们细微差别的运用，将会提高你对所有英文读物中这些常见词的隐含关系和指称对象的理解。为何不在下一篇研究论文中就学以致用呢？现在就开始吧！

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

Uni-edit