**科技论文的阅读与写作**

# Course -5: Breaking Up Long Sentences – First Half

## http://inpluslab.com/paperwriting

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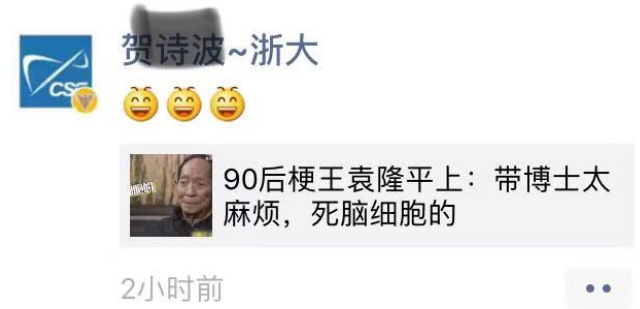
数据科学与计算机学院

学院个人主页：

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# Some Forewords

- Why do I organize this class in English?
  - Although this requires many reading, it is good to you
  - It may be difficult at first
  - 千里之行始于足下
  - Always choose the most difficult path, if you need to
  - Congratulations! You are still here!

# Some facts before Course 5

- A survey carried out at Stanford University revealed that
  - 86.4% of students admitted that in order to appear more intelligent, they used **complex language** in their essays, theses and dissertations.

- The average length of a sentence in English has become shorter and shorter over the centuries.
  - Shakespeare's time (1564-1616): 45 words
  - 150 years ago: 29 words
  - Today's experts recommend: 15-18 words

# Some facts before Course 5 (cont.)

- **John Adair**, a communications expert who wrote *The Effective Communicator*, reports that 90% of people
  - understand an 8-word sentence on first reading,
  - but only about 4% understand a 27-word sentence first time.

- You will lose more readers in the first 50 words than you will in the next 250.

- The Viennese art historian, **Ernst Gombrich**
  - wrote many of this books in **English** rather than in **his native German**.

  - His ***Story of Art*** (1950), is one of the most widely accessible art history books ever published, precisely because (恰恰因为) it is written in a clear, simple, unpretentious style.

# What is the buzz?

- Is this **73-word** sentence written by a native or non-native English speaker?

  – When we reflect on the vast diversity of the plants and animals which have been cultivated, and which have varied during all ages under the most different climates and treatment, I think we are driven to conclude that this greater variability is simply due to our domestic productions having been raised under conditions of life not so uniform as, and somewhat different from, those to which the parent-species have been exposed under nature.

It comes from Darwin's On the Origin of Species. 1859

# What is the buzz? (cont.)

- Is it easy to read without much mental effort?
  - The aim is of our study was **firstly** to assess changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period in order to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism as already investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way, and **secondly** to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically (零星地).

试想，你的导师拿到这样的论文初稿时，心情会是怎样？

# What is the buzz? (cont.)

- Now look at the 4 short sentences
  a) The aim was to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism.
  b) The second aim was to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically.
  c) This aspect has already been investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way.
  d) We assessed changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period.

# What is the buzz? (cont.)

- No research has ever proved that long sentences are an aid to reader comprehension.

- A lot of research has proved that
  - shorter sentences make comprehension much easier for the reader.

- You may think that writing in a simple way with short sentences is not elegant and is superficial.
- The question is:
  - Is this text effective or not?
  - Will my readers be able to understand it easily?

# Outline: **First-Half** of **Course-5**

1.  **Analyze why and how long sentences are created**

2.  Using short sentences will help your co-authors if they need to modify your text

3.  Using short sentence often entails repeating the key word, thus improving clarity

4.  Only use a series of short sentences to attract the reader's attention

5.  Combine two short sentences into one longer if this will avoid redundancy

# 5.1 Why and How long sentences are created

- **S1 (19 words):** English owes its origins to the Angles and Saxons, two tribes from what is now northern Germany and Denmark.

- **S2 (extend to 49 words):**
- Owing its origins to the Anglo Saxons (a tribe who lived in what is now Denmark and Northern Germany), English is the international language of communication, in part due to the importance of the USA, rather than the Queen of England, and is now studied by 1.1 billion people.
- Not bad, however, too long.

# 5.1 Why and How long sentences are created (cont.)

- **S3 (Break up S2 into a better solution):**
  - English owes its origins to the Anglo Saxons, who were a tribe from what is  now Denmark and Northern Germany.  ~~(a tribe who…Germany), English is the~~
  - It has become the international language of communication. ~~In part due to~~
  - This is in part due to the importance of the USA, rather than the Queen of England. ~~, and is now~~
  - English is now studied by 1.1 billion people.

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# 5.2 Using short sentences will help your co-authors

- If your co-authors need to modify your text,

- having short sentences in the initial draft means that co-authors can:

  - add to them (添加新内容) without making the resulting sentence too long

  - change their order


- For example, let's have a look at S3

# 5.2 Using short sentences will help your co-authors (cont.)

- **Original S3:**
  - English owes its origins to the Anglo Saxons, who were a tribe from what is  now Denmark and Northern Germany.
  - It has become the international language of communication.
  - This is in part due to the importance of the USA, rather than the Queen of England.
  - English is now studied by 1.1 billion people.

# 5.2 Using short sentences will help your co-authors (cont.)

- **S4 (after re-ordering the sequence):**
  - English is now studied by 1.1 billion people.
  - It owes its origins to the Anglo Saxons, who were a tribe from what is now Denmark and Northern Germany.
  - It has become the international language of communication.
  - This is in part due to the importance of the USA, rather than the Queen of England.

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# 5.3 Using short sentence often helps repeating the key word, thus improving clarity

- Repeating key words is NOT a bad style in technical writing.

- In fact, repetition helps readers to follow your text

- It also helps your co-authors
  - if they need to modify the order of the sentences in your draft.

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# 5.4 Only use a series of short sentences to attract the reader's attention

- You cannot and should not write a whole paper using short sentences
- Example
  - We investigated the meaning of life.
  - We used four different methodologies.
  - Each methodology gave contradictory results.
  - The results confirmed previous research indicating that we understand absolutely nothing.
  - Future research will investigate something more simple: the cerebral (大脑的) life of a PhD student.

- How do you feel?
  - Like traveling in a car with a learner driver over a **bumpy** (颠簸的) surface

# 5.4 Only use a series of short sentences to attract the reader's attention (cont.)

- Revision:
  - In order to investigate the meaning of life, we used four different methodologies. ~~Each methodology~~ , which gave contradictory results.
  - Those results confirmed the findings of previous research: ~~indicating that~~ we understand absolutely nothing.
  - Future research will investigate something more simple~~:~~ i.e., the cerebral (大脑的) life of a PhD student.


- Short sentences would be perfect
  - for highlighting some important point in the Results
  - or in the Discussion,
  - or when expressing the key aims of your research

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# 5.5 Combine two short sentences into one longer if this will avoid redundancy

- **Although** short sentence is advocated, **however**, two short sentences **should be combined** into a **longer** sentence if this will
  - **reduce** the amount of **redundancy**
  - and **improve readability**.
- Example
  - *\* On the one hand*, companies are increasingly *and significantly* making use of green claims in advertising their products (Grun and Verde, 2017). *On the other hand,* consumers often believe that these claims are not reliable and*, because of this,* they are not orienting their purchasing decisions towards greener products.

# 5.5 Combine two short sentences into one longer if this will avoid redundancy (cont.)

- **How to make a revision**:

  – * On the one hand, Although companies are increasingly and significantly make ing use of green claims in advertising their products (Grun and Verde, 2017), . On the other hand, consumers often believe that these claims are not reliable and, because of this, thus they are not do not orienting their purchasing decisions towards greener products.

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# This is today's class

- Thank you so much for your coming!

- Next time we will learn how to divide up the long sentences into short ones

# Extra sharing of a recent Article

- 一篇微信公众号文章

- Highlights：

在美国7年求学执教的见闻和感受

作者对理科教育一直很感兴趣，多次就此话题发帖。很多朋友对教育以及中美体系比...

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✕          图灵人工智能          ···

**精神原子弹**

一个突出的感受 就是关于人的精神面貌。这里是我见过的人的精神力爆发性最强的地方。有一批为学术痴狂的学生 时不时处于唯恐自己学得太少太慢的精神状态。我也是其中之一。在来到这里之前，我觉得自己长期处于一种与周边格格不入的学术化偏执状态，来了之后我觉得自己不孤独了。我甚至很担心我的某些同学会过劳死。

**惊人的效率**

强大的背景和只争朝夕的精神造就了惊人的学习效率。和中国的A大学做个对比。比如在A大学 五六个好学生进行任务分解折腾十二三个星期的讨论班（每周讨论一

**强烈的主人翁意识**

ＢＣ的不少教授自身便是学界领袖，决定着学术的发展方向。这深深影响了学校的气氛和学生的心态，仿佛自己就处于世界中心未来也要争做主人翁一般。这固然有自大和可笑的一方面，但也意味着很多学生面对再难啃的学习上硬骨头都有"志在必得""攻必克"的自信。而这种自信在中国国内的大学是非常缺乏的：我见过太多国内的聪明孩子不敢去学最难的学术文献。

# Extra sharing of a recent Article (cont.)

- 一篇微信公众号文章

在美国7年求学执教的见闻和感受

作者对理科教育一直很感兴趣，多次就此话题发帖。很多朋友对教育以及中美体系比…

## 人的差距是最大的

我一向不认为中国大学和世界一流的差距 主要在于体制。首当其冲的问题是**钱比人家少太多**。这个问题在近年来得到了较大改善，但也面临需要持续大投入和一定时间积累的问题。

那么在钱的问题不那么突出以后，什么是主要矛盾呢？我以为是**人的差距**。确切地说是**中国未能在本土完成基础科学一流人才的原始积累**。我希望我的见闻能使读者理解为什么即使中国现在全盘复制美国的大学体制，中国的大学的基础科学研究生教育也是无法和B C这样的学校竞争的--- 研究生们的 学术基础天赋 野心 勇气 甚至勤奋程度都远远拼不过。

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作者对理科教育一直很感兴趣，多次就此话题发帖。很多朋友对教育以及中美体系比…

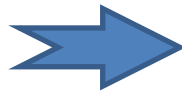**1** 在中低年级并没有完全想清楚自己未来要干什么因此花了不少时间去体验其他的专业以及很多"通识课"。大学自由灵活的体制也鼓励他们这么做。

**2** 以为自己所有的专业课都学得很好就行了。

这样做有啥问题呢？ 问题在于他们被真正拔尖的孩子（其他学校的和外国的）甩开得太多太多了：三四年前大家的起点差不多，而现在别人"轻舟已过万重山"高出他们好几个境界去了。怎么会这样呢？这是因为最拔尖的学生具有很强的 **目的性** （我一定要当科学家）， **自我指导性**（给他足够的书，他自己就能钻研出来） 和 **自我激发性**（学得越好就越不满足甚至越焦虑）。

# Could you do me a favor

- **Help us** collect user-trace data for a research topic. The data includes:
  - GPS data
  - The top *N* Apps you are using
- Don't worry about the privacy / security
  - We will remove all your sensitive information

Scan to download the APP

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- You can also download the app from the Homepage of this class:
  - http://inpluslab.com/paperwriting

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