

Features of Academic Writing

Week 2

English for Academic Purposes

English Language Teaching Unit

Faculty of Humanities and Sciences

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the features of academic writing
- Create academic texts using the features of academic writing



Language features

Complexity

Formality

Precision

Objectivity

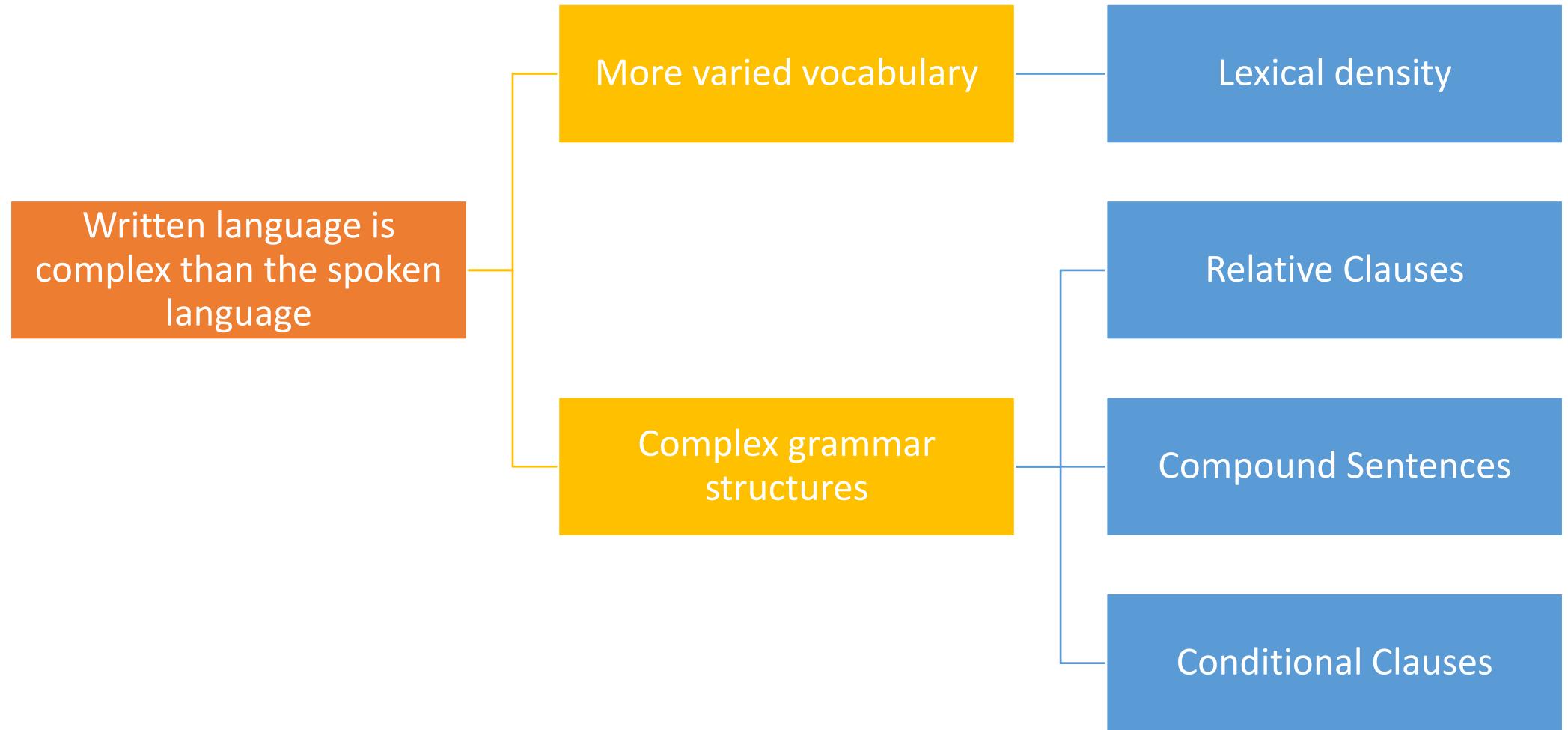
Explicitness

Accuracy

Hedging

Responsibility

Complexity



More lexical density: distinguish between content words and function words

- Content words
 - nouns (e.g. dog, Susan, oil)
 - adjectives (e.g. red, happy, cold)
 - adverbs (e.g. very, carefully, yesterday)
 - lexical verbs (e.g. run, walk, sit)
- Function words
 - auxiliary verbs (e.g. can, will, have)
 - prepositions (e.g. in, to, after)
 - conjunctions (e.g. and, but, if)
 - numerals (e.g. two, three, first)
 - determiners (e.g. the, those, my)
 - pronouns (e.g. she, yourself, who)

Use Relative Clauses

- Air pollution can cause health problems. Air pollution is largely caused by motor vehicles.
- Air pollution, **which** is mostly caused by motor vehicles, can cause health problems.

Who : person

Which : animals and things

That: people, animals and things

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

Compound Sentences and Conditional Clauses

- Compound sentences consist of two independent clauses linked together with a conjunction such as ‘and’, ‘for’ or ‘but’.
 - I really want to study, **but** I’m too tired.
- I will be really happy, **if** I pass the IELTS test.

If present tense + will/will not+ infinitive without to
Possible future situation

If past simple + would/ would not + infinitive without to
Present or future situations which are not possible

If past perfect + would (not) + have + past participle
Unreal past conditions

- Because the technology has improved it's less risky than it used to be when you install them at the same time, and it doesn't cost so much either.
- Improvements in technology have reduced the risks and high costs associated with simultaneous installation.

Formality

- Avoid colloquial words and expressions
things/stuff/a lot of/ sort of
- Avoid abbreviated forms: "can't", "doesn't", "shouldn't"
- Avoid clichés
Last but not the least/First and foremost
- Avoid two-word verbs
put off, bring up, set up

- Avoid Rhetorical questions

Industrial sites cause vast amounts of environmental pollution, so why do we still use them?

- Avoid Run-on expressions

and so on, etc.

Do not have exact answers

Do not expect an answer from the readers or the audience

Precision

- Be precise when information, dates or figures are given.

Lot of people suffer from cancer.

50 million people suffer from cancer.

Objectivity

80% of the girls at SLIIT like Korean dramas.



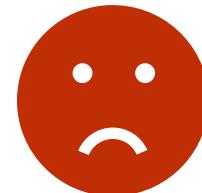
Objectivity

Data
Information

Subjectivity

Data/
information
My
opinion
My idea,
views

80% of the girls at SLIIT like Korean dramas as they have no sense of proper art and are stupid enough to watch them.





How to achieve objectivity

- **Avoid** words like I, me, myself
- **Don't write:** In my opinion, this is a very interesting study.
 - **Write:** This is a very interesting study.
- **Avoid** 'you'
- **Don't write:** You can easily forget how different life was 50 years ago.
 - **Write:** It is easy to forget how difficult life was 50 years ago.

- Minimize the use of active voice and try to use the passive voice
 - Active: We used a standard graphical representation
 - Passive: A standard graphical representation was used to...
- Active: We have observed that
- Passive: It has been observed that
- Use the generic pronoun “one”

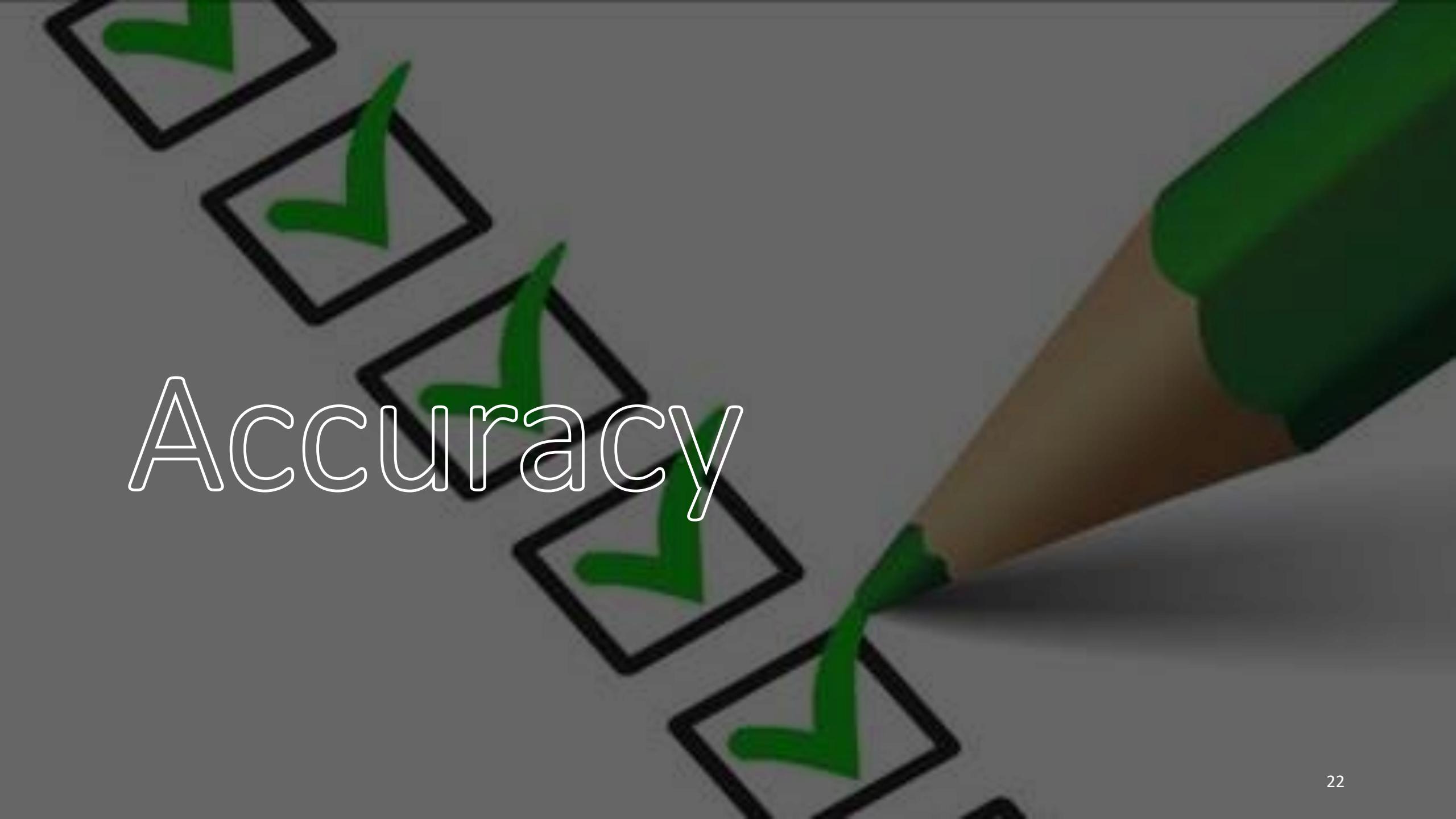
Underline all the examples of subjective language in the following paragraph.

Everybody knows about the threat of global warming to our earth. We all pollute the atmosphere with gases and we all throw away rubbish that could be recycled. As far as I am concerned, these are two aspects that can be improved. I believe that everyone should use more public transport and leave their car at home. I also think that we can all learn to recycle more of our plastic and glass bottles. Even our left-over food can be used as compost.

The background of the slide shows a perspective view of a road curving away from the viewer. Several yellow diamond-shaped road signs with black arrows are placed along the sides of the road, pointing in different directions to indicate potential turns or exits. The sky above is a clear blue.

Explicitness

- Use signposting
 - Give the source
-
- Managing people is not easy. However, it can be done successfully with proper planning.
 - According to Peters (1983), evidence from the case study of foreign students indicates culture shock is inevitable.

A close-up photograph of a wooden pencil with a dark green eraser tip. The pencil is positioned diagonally across the frame, pointing from the bottom left towards the top right. It is writing a series of green checkmarks in a list of checkboxes. The checkboxes are white with black outlines, and the checkmarks are a bright green color. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Accuracy

- Correct use of grammar
- Correct use of words
 - Choose the correct word, for example, "meeting", "assembly" , "gathering" or "conference".

Hedging



- Use of cautious language
- Using suitable modal verbs (e.g. can, could, may, might, should...)
- Using a suitable reporting verb (e.g. claim, suggest, assert, maintain, argue)
- Avoiding words like “all, everyone” (unless this is actually true)
 - This concept appears to establish three categories.
 - It may be possible to obtain...

A close-up photograph of a small green plant with several leaves growing out of a mound of dark brown soil. A hand is visible on the right side of the frame, holding a paintbrush with a dark handle and a silver ferrule, pointing it towards the plant. The background is blurred.

Responsibility

- Demonstrate knowledge of the source text (paraphrase/summarize)
- Provide evidence (citations)
- Provide justification (citations)

References

- <http://www.uefap.com/writing/writframgenre.htm>
- [http://lib.vcomsats.edu.pk/library/ENG401/COURSE%20CONTENT/LECTURE%20SLIDE/LECTURE%20\(22\)/COMSAT%2021%20Features%20of%20Academic%20Writing.ppt](http://lib.vcomsats.edu.pk/library/ENG401/COURSE%20CONTENT/LECTURE%20SLIDE/LECTURE%20(22)/COMSAT%2021%20Features%20of%20Academic%20Writing.ppt)
- <https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/27/ielts-writing-complex-sentence/>
- <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/english-for-study-intermediate/0/steps/35258>

thank you