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***English for Research: Usage, Style, and Grammar by
Adrian Wallwork. Springer, New York Heidelberg
Dordrecht London (2013), xvi +252, ISBN: 978-1-4614-
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English for Research, a book on various aspects of English language, is organized into 28 chapters. On the whole, the book can be divided into two sections. The first section (chapters 1-15) is an endeavor to tackle grammatical issues as related to research papers. In this part only those issues closely related to writing are the major concerns of the author. Consequently, one should not expect to find answers to his problems for instance with ‘wish sentences’, ‘if sentences’, ‘reported speech’, and so forth. In the second section of the book (chapters 16-28), the writer highlights sensitive aspects of writing and beautifully illustrates them via examples. He only emphasizes those aspects that are typically problematic and are generally found in research papers, for instance definite and indefinite articles. He also brings into light the delicate differences between present simple and past simple in presenting the results of any given research project. It is worth mentioning that the illustrative examples used have been taken from actual common mistakes made in real papers. Each chapter enjoys subdivisions and this makes it very convenient for the reader to have a vivid picture of the issues connected to the main grammatical item. In subdivisions, one can find numbered guidelines or rules that are sequentially presented, in logical order, from more to less important. Examples are also offered in sentences under Yes and No columns. The examples in ‘Yes’ column are taken from native speakers; but those in ‘No’ column are cases violating the respective rules. In addition to an index of grammatical terms, there are two appendices: a glossary and a list of problematic prepositions.

From chapter one through chapter fourteen, grammatical terms, as it is usual with any grammar book, are discussed meticulously in every detail. Hence chapters one and two are devoted to

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nouns, while giving the rules for regular, irregular and genitive case in a neat and orderly manner. In a table below each grammatical item, examples are given for each numbered item, respectively. Chapters three, four and five are about articles, namely definite, indefinite and zero article. Since they are presented in separate chapters, this makes it easy for the reader to absorb the rules with some crystal clear examples for each item. Besides, there is a section added to this part 'A' versus 'An' usage with acronyms, digits and symbols. Quantifiers are dealt with in chapter six in the form of comparison i.e. 'any' versus 'some', 'any' versus 'no' and 'each' versus 'every'. Chapters seven, eight and nine are allotted to relative pronouns, tenses, and conditional sentences. As to relative pronouns, the writer warns about ambiguities caused by shortened relative clauses in lengthy sentences involving relative word 'which'.

Chapter ten on active and passive sentences considers the topic from a different perspective. In other words, the preferability of one over another is argued drawing a distinction between passive and active in writing books, research manuscripts along with their main uses. Chapter eleven about imperative, infinitive, and gerunds very nicely pinpoints ambiguity caused by gerunds, with real examples, highlighting problematic cases. Chapter twelve surveys modals from a quite different angle, mostly with a focus on writing papers. The chapter accentuates appropriate modals for research projects and discourages the usage of some modals as being rarely used or sounding arrogant in research papers. Chapters thirteen and fourteen investigate conjunctive adverbs, discussing the matter in two categories. First adverbs and conjunctions then adverbs and prepositions. Here conjunctive adverbs are presented in subcategories focusing on problem causing items and providing the clue for the user to avoid pitfalls.

From chapter fifteen the reader leaves grammatical rules sphere behind and enters the realm of writing, starting with sentence as the basic unit of writing. The writer reiterates that lengthy sentences are inappropriate for research projects. More guidelines are provided in this respect accordingly. Word order is made perceptible to the reader by classification to three subsections, A. Nouns and verbs B. Adverbs C. Adjectives, and past participles, rendered in chapters sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. These chapters give helpful information about the order of the elements in a sentence with ad hoc examples from research papers displayed in tables under 'Yes' and 'No' titles. Chapter nineteen presents usual rules for comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs and their position in a sentence. The writer wraps up the chapter with rules for parallel structures. Measurements and numbers are the titles given to chapters twenty and twenty-one. In these two chapters the writer proceeds by offering dos and don'ts of using abbreviations, symbols and articles. In some instances, he offers British and American variations of some items for their usage. Chapters twenty-two and twenty- three are allotted to acronyms, followed by abbreviations, punctuation and usage rules for each of them. In some cases, it is mentioned that the given rules are not definite. Taking precautionary measures, in the table for the usage the term 'not recommended' is used instead of 'No'.

As the writer pays special attention to the issues concerned with writing, in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five capitalization and punctuation are discussed with all the details, in some occasions giving alternatives for the usage. As to punctuation, thirteen out of fourteen punctuation marks are given with examples from research papers. Chapter twenty-six suggests four main ways for researchers to refer to other authors in their work. In some cases, 'optimal

solutions' are provided to avoid tediousness and create variety in writing literature review. In chapter twenty-seven the author gives essential guidelines for presentation of figures and tables to appeal visually to the reader. Furthermore, he gives some clues for efficient conveyance of information via figures and tables. Chapter twenty-eight about spelling rules is concerned with typical typological errors made in a printed text. Meanwhile a comparison is made between American English and British English in this respect.

Looking at the book from a critical point of view at the very beginning and flipping through the book, the reader comes across one of the best introductions ever written for these types of books. Such as Crews (1987), Leech (1989) and Shaw (1988). In most these books, introduction has been replaced with a brief preface, which fail to live up to readers' expectation and do not categorically mention who is not supposed to find answers for his questions in the book. In the introduction the author honestly poses some general questions which may cross any reader's mind at the first glance. Then he gives sincere answers to all these questions. It is not like quite a few other books that take advantage of introduction to try to publicize to attract customer attention.

Therefore, for any prospective reader who decides to purchase the book I highly recommend to read the introduction as a complete guide. The writer outspokenly tells the reader the book is specially designed for researchers, editors, and proofreaders. Besides, he gives cross references to use the book in combination with some other books. In addition, he introduces some other useful sources and books for further information in this regard. The author tries to convey very delicate points concerning writing. This, sure, will be appreciated by any scrupulous editor or researcher. The writer tries to make a distinction among different fields of research as far as the usage of a grammatical item is concerned.

Addressing style, the writer to a large extent fails to live up to his promises. In other words, he only generally examines style related issues like tense, voice, sentence length and punctuation while some specific style related topics are left unscrutinized. The topics that are closely related to style, like the type of the texts used in each field of science, style for correspondence, instructions and procedures are left untreated.

I believe one of the prominent features that makes the book larger than life is the objectivity, plainness and clarity of the book achieved through vast number of grammatical and ungrammatical examples to persuade the reader to adopt the writer's point of view. Since the book, according to the author, is the result of his twenty-five years of experience correcting research papers, studying the book can definitely provide an opportunity for the user to avoid many typical mistakes made by other researchers.

My final judgment is that the book is a reliable source for researchers, referees, and writers for newspapers, magazines or the Web. The book can be chosen as one of writing reference books to be placed in study room shelf. It will also be an essential aid to many professionals in science and technology engaged in writing papers, manuals and textbooks. It will help those involved in writing profession such as bloggers and literary editors to be accurate, efficient and clear.

References

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