

SOME FEATURES OF FORMAL WRITING IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

SOLOVYOVA O. V., Senior Lecturer of the Department of Romance and Germanic Languages and Translation, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv)

The article reveals features of formal writing in contemporary English. Literary works by modern American writers such as M. Baker and H. Hess are taken as a basis, whose works are examples of clearly violating the fundamental principle of constructing an English sentence, which is characterized by the direct order of the words, that is, subject – verb – object – adverbial modifier of place – adverbial modifier of time. The differences of perceiving the new information are shown on the basis of putting the new information at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

Keywords: *writing, word order, new information, feature.*

У статті розкрито особливості офіційного письма в сучасній англійській мові. За основу взято художні твори сучасних американських письменниць М. Бейкер та Н. Хес, у творах яких яскраво представлено приклади порушення основного правила побудови англійського речення, характерною рисою якого є прямий порядок слів, тобто, підмет – присудок – додаток – обставина місця – обставина часу. На основі принципу подання інформації на початку або в кінці речення показані відмінності в сприйнятті нової інформації.

Ключові слова: *письмо, порядок слів, нова інформація, риса.*

International tests such as The TOEFL iBT[®], IELTS and the domestic test IET assess the abilities of non-native English-speakers to understand and use academic English in four skill areas: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. Moreover, Ukrainian higher institutional establishments use the IE Test scores to evaluate applicants' readiness to enroll them in their institutions. But the problem is that to writing the least academic time is spent in comparison with time spent for developing other skill areas. In the curriculum of the "Practical course of the English language" for the second-year-of-study students no time is devoted to writing both formal and informal. Though finishing the course students must know how to keep their writing clear and concise and make sure that they get their ideas over in a comprehensible form.

The issue of correct writing is not new. Many researchers both Ukrainian and foreign ones discuss the ways to improve the academic writing. In Birmingham City University there is Center for Academic Success [1] focusing on writing guides, grammar guides, and study skill guides and speaking guides. According to P. W. Peterson [2] students must be taught from the mechanisms of basic sentence writing to the ability to construct a simple paragraph. In "Writing Skills Practice Book for EFL" P. W. Peterson gives an example to plan the work on writing chapter by chapter, from simple to complex. For this reason the author believes the students will benefit the most if they study systematically. In addition Ukrainian scholar S. Nikolayeva presents a series of exercises for enhancing writing skills. But particular features of formal writing have still to be studied.

In part, it is necessary to pay attention to organizing information in writing, including the information principle, the word order.

In English the information moves from something known i.e. already mentioned or obvious from the context at the beginning to something new at the end. Mark Foley and Diana Hall have called this the information principle [3, 330].

For example, in the sentence *The academic year started and freshmen plunged into the student life. Mostly they were dressed in shorts and blue jeans with holes.*

The academic year started – information obvious from the context

freshmen – new information

they – already mentioned

shorts and blue jeans with holes – new information

Starting sentences with information, which relates back to something already mentioned, helps the text to “flow” more smoothly and makes it easier for the reader to understand.

For example,

*The Monarch is perhaps best known for its unusual life cycle and dramatic migration habits. Not only do **they** go through the four stages of life typical for a butterfly – the egg; the larva, or caterpillar; the pupa, or chrysalis; and the adult butterfly – but **they** also go through four generations in one year.* [4, 292]

In English to show which part of a sentence or clause contains the most important point or “focus” is to place the important point at the beginning or end of the sentence – there are two positions which appear most important to a reader or listener.

For example,

***Toklanni’s return** to the village caused quite a stir* [5, 103].

If there is the wish to put the focus on an item that does not naturally come at the beginning or end of the sentence, it is grammar that to bring the item to the front focus position.

For example, cleft sentences [3, 331] are possible to be used here (in a cleft or a divided sentence, information which could be given in one clause is divided into two parts, each with its own verb):

It was Toklanni who caused quite a stir on returning to the village.

Toklanni was the returner who caused such a stir in the village.

Similarly the focus can be given to something by moving it into the end focus position.

For example,

The man who caused quite a stir on returning to the village was Toklanni.

Another point is that because word order in the English language is fixed in order to emphasize or contrast something it can be moved to an unfamiliar position. In this case it is possible with adverbial expressions and infinitive clauses, objects and complements (Table 1).

For example,

The facade of the house was blank and austere. But it was ornate and luxurious inside. → But inside it was ornate and luxurious.

I may be old, but I’m not young. → Old I may be, but stupid I am not!

Priscilla invariable rejected impoverished suitors. Her only ambition was to marry for money. → To marry for money was her only ambition [3, 331].

Table 1.

Fronting adverbial expressions and infinitive clauses, objects and complements

adjectives in comparative and superlative degree	<i>Much more interesting is to study English in the authentic environment. Many of Ukrainian cities have a rich history. Best of all has Kyiv.</i>
so + adjective + that clause	<i>So stifling was outside that all people were overcrowding in the building of the admission board.</i>
such	<i>Modern education system in Ukraine lacks academic integrity. Such is the heritage from the Soviet society.</i>
also + adverbial clause	<i>Members of the government were present at the famous actress and an artist's wedding ceremony. Also at the service members of the president's family could be seen.</i>
adverbial phrases describing position and participle verbs of position and movement (e.g. stand, attach, lie)	<i>The community room attached to the post was bright lit by dozens of candles carefully placed not to be accidentally knocked over. In the far end corner the older women clustered around Annie as her children rushed off to join their peers in play [5, 288].</i>
infinitive clauses	<i>For hundreds years there has been a discussion about Shakespearean's quotes. To be or not to be is the most sophisticated one.</i>
objects	<i>Kate had seen many wild animals in the woods. The deer she wished to see.</i>
complements	<i>The lady entered the room. The face was beautiful, but in any other way Kate was disappointed</i>

In the English language it is a usual thing to put long and complex phrases or clauses containing new information at the end of the sentence. This principle, according to M. Foley and D. Hall, is called the end-weight principle. In fact, the information principle and the end-weight principle intensify each other [3, 330].

For example,

*A striking feature about National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine is **that more than 26 thousand students and PhD students study here, 2, 600 people including 300 professors and 1, 000 Phds and assistant professors work here.***

M. Foley and D. Hall state that sentences with a heavy clause at the beginning can seem clumsy and difficult to understand other [3, 330].

For example,

***That more than 26 thousand students and PhD students study here, 2, 600 people including 300 professors and 1, 000 Phds and assistant professors work here** is a striking feature about National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine.*

If the subject of a sentence is along clause it is possible to use a formal subject "it" or "there" so that it enables to put the long subject at the end.

For example,

*It is hard to believe **that academic integrity split out of our minds and plagiarism took the leading place in the academic process.***

It can also be a formal object anticipating a later clause. This allows the speaker to combine several pieces of information into one sentence, again putting new information at the end.

For example,

*We leave **it** the Ukrainian future generations to consider the importance of the bloody fight for Ukraine's independence.*

While writing one should keep in mind manipulating grammar and vocabulary in order to follow the principles mentioned above suitable vocabulary and grammar have to be chosen. As the subject usually comes at the beginning of a sentence in English, the simplest way to organize a sentence is to choose a subject which is connected with the previous information.

For example,

*Inside the building, **stairs** do not separate the floors in the usual place. In fact there aren't **any** to climb; art viewers in the Guggenheim move on a flat, circular ramp or walkway around the curved walls of the building where the art is hung [4, 33].*

***This route**, opened in the second century B.C., cut through boiling hot deserts and rugged mountains. **The Silk Road** crossed through a number of independent lands, but the Parthian territories were especially troubling. Once the traders arrived **there**, the local government made them pay large amounts of money to pass through [4, 33].*

Therefore, to receive a high score in writing we must always remember that the writing must be well organized, include a variety of sentence structures, be mostly grammatically accurate, use sophisticated but appropriate vocabulary. While organizing information in writing the two principles such as the information principle and the end-weight principle as well as contrast and emphasis will be of great help.

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ДЕЯКІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ОФІЦІЙНОГО ПИСЬМА В СУЧАСНІЙ АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

Соловійова Олена Віталіївна, старший викладач кафедри романо-германських мов і перекладу Національного університету біоресурсів і природокористування України (м.Київ)

В статье раскрыты особенности официального письма в современном английском языке. За основу взяты художественные произведения современных американских писательниц М. Бейкер и Н. Хес, в произведениях которых ярко представлены примеры нарушения основного правила построения английского предложения, характерной чертой которого является прямой порядок слов, то есть, подлежащее – сказуемое – дополнение – обстоятельство места – обстоятельство времени. На основе принципа представления информации в

начале или в конце предложения показаны различия в восприятии новой информации.

Ключевые слова: *письмо, порядок слов, новая информация, черта.*