Common Academic Expressions in English
(Adapted from Biber, D., Conrad, S. & Cortes, V. (2004). *If you look at…*: Lexical bundles in university teaching and textbooks. *Applied Linguistics, 25*(3), 371–405; Ren, J. (2021). Variability and functions of lexical bundles in research articles of applied linguistics and pharmaceutical sciences. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 50*, 100968; and Lu, X. & Deng, J. (2019). *With the rapid development:* A contrastive analysis of lexical bundles in dissertation abstracts by Chinese and L1 English doctoral students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 39*, 21-36.)

This handout is designed for multilingual writers developing academic writing competency in English. Here we classify common academic expressions in English based on the functions they perform in research articles (e.g., to emphasize the significance of a topic, to outline the structure of a research article). For writers who speak English as an additional language, having a large repertoire of these readily-made expressions improves writing fluency. Therefore, in this handout we list academic expressions that are of high frequency across disciplines and can be effectively used in various situations and contexts in academic texts.

1. **Emphasizing Significance**
    At the beginning of a research article, researchers typically set the context for the current research by emphasizing it as part of a significant or well-established research area. Some commonly-used expressions to claim centrality or significance of a certain research topic include:

    there has been widespread concern about
    one of the most pressing issues in
    one of the main issues surrounding
    as one of the challenges/issues/problems
    play a central role in
    is at the heart of
    has been recognized as one of the major
    has increasingly become a topic of interest in
    it is widely acknowledged that

2. **Indicating Uncertainty**
    In academic writing, researchers often use tentative voice (e.g., it is possible that…) to express uncertainty. It allows researchers to present the claims with the appropriate accuracy while recognizing alternative viewpoints and possible objections.

    it is possible that
    is more likely to
    it could be argued that
    is probably due to
    may be due to
    the data suggested the possibility that
    it might be expected that
    alternatively, it may be that

3. **Specifying Characteristics**
   Presenting the attributes of a concept, a procedure, or a result accurately is central to academic or scientific writing. Expressions under this category include those that specify quantity or degree, make reference to time or space, or describe a methodological procedure:

   Quantity & Degree
   the majority of the
   a large number of
   a number of studies
   as part of the
   by a factor of
   a broad range of
   a wide variety of
   of the most frequent
   the extent to which
   the degree to which

   Time & Space
   at the time of
   at the end of
   over the course of
   in the midst of
   at a time when
   in the field of
   of the present/current study
   were performed as previously described

   Procedures
   the structure of the
   the composition of the
   in the form of
   in the presence/absence of
   a significant increase/reduction in
   the relationship between the
   the ways in which
   the nature of the
   in the design of
   in the development of
   in the process of
   can be applied to
   can be divided into

4. **Outlining Text Organization**
   Depending on the scope of the study, researchers often briefly and explicitly outline the structure of the study by providing a roadmap that guides readers through the textual organization, using expressions that signal the text organization:

   The remainder of the paper is organized as follows.
   The objective of my research is to
   In this study we aim(ed) to

This paper begins with a discussion of
In the second part of this essay I analyze
Section III lays out the model and basic assumptions.
In the final section we discuss
followed by an analysis of

5. **Making Connections**

Academic writing is writer-responsible. That is, rather than relying on readers to figure out the meaning of a difficult text, it is the writer's responsibility to make ideas and connections as explicit as possible. Expressions that make interconnections between the pieces of information presented can circumvent ambiguity or misinterpretation. Depending on the relationship between a topic and associated details, some commonly used expressions include:

Additional
as well as the
in addition to the

Conditional
in the context of
in the case of
on the basis of
in the field of
in light of
in the presence of
from the perspective of

Comparative
as opposed to
in contrast to
despite the fact that
is consistent with
is in line with the
in accordance with

Inductive
the results indicate that
our data suggest that
does not mean that
the reason for this
as a result

Objective
to account for the
to better understand the
in order to explore the

6. **Voicing Attitudes**
   In academic writing, researchers indicate their positive or negative evaluation of previous studies regarding their models, techniques, results, etc., in order to bring readers' attention to a certain argument or reach a shared understanding with the readers.

   it can be expected that
   it is clear/apparent/obvious that
   has the potential to
   is of great importance
   it is important to note that
   it is important to emphasize that
   it is noteworthy that
   there is a need to
   it must be noted that
   has not been clearly defined
   some studies fail to establish
   fail to identify any robust impact of