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The Academic Phrasebank

CASE STUDY

FACTFILE

- > Written by Dr John Morley, Director of University-wide Language Programmes
- > Originally developed as an online resource
- > Now sold in over 80 countries worldwide
- > Available as a [Kindle download](#)



“I came to the realisation that to be a successful academic writer, it was important to acquire a repertoire of suitable phrases. I set about creating an online resource.”

Dr John Morley

ABOUT THE ACADEMIC PHRASEBANK

The Academic Phrasebank is a book produced for researchers and students who want to improve their academic writing skills. Dr. John Morley, who is Director of University-wide Language Programmes, wrote The Academic Phrasebank to help both writers of English as a second language and native speakers. The book provides advice and contextual examples on a broad range of academic writing topics.

Originally developed as an online resource, The Academic Phrasebank has been significantly revised and was published last year on the University's e-commerce site [Click2Go](#) which was set up by UMIP, to distribute software and other copyright materials.

We met up with John to find out more...

When did you come up with the idea of The Academic Phrasebank and what prompted you?

I suppose it was back in the 1980s when I was working on a part-time masters degree by distance. This was before email or the internet and I was living in a fairly isolated situation in rural New South Wales. Initially, I struggled with some of the academic assignments, and I soon came to the realisation that to be a successful academic writer, it was important to acquire a repertoire of suitable phrases. By phrases, I mean word combinations serving a useful communicative function in the text whilst adhering to the stylistic conventions of the academic genre. This insight was informed by my own extensive experience as a teacher of English as a second language and as a learner of other languages. It also coincided with a growing awareness, within the field of applied linguistics, of the central role played by phraseology in language and in language development. Later in my work at Charles Sturt University in Australia, and subsequently at Manchester, in my role as lecturer in academic writing, I realised that

a phraseological resource is exactly what non-native speaker academic writers need and I set about creating an online resource for this group of people.

The Academic Phrasebank was initially offered as a web resource. Why did you decide to turn it into a downloadable product?

In early 2014, I attached a Google survey form to the website in order to elicit users' ideas on how the resource could be improved. I received quite a few requests for the resource to be available as a pdf file. So that's where the idea came from.

The Academic Phrasebank has now sold in over 80 countries world-wide, how has word spread?

I think the Academic Phrasebank surfaces quite frequently in Google searches on questions of academic writing. In fact, I think it is one of the most popular websites for academic writing. Also, these days, many universities all over the world, especially in English speaking countries, refer their own students to the site.

How do you feel you have benefitted from The Academic Phrasebank?

The Academic Phrasebank has provided a rich area for research, and this has in turn attracted quite a lot of interest within the field of English for academic purposes. As well as continuing to explore and map academic phraseology, questions about the boundary between phrasal recycling, which is considered to be a legitimate practice, and textual copying (without acknowledgement), which is considered to be illegitimate, and about the role phraseology plays in developing writers and in helping writers to shape and express their ideas, are areas I am currently working on.

How have you found the Click2Go platform and what did you especially value from the University?

To be honest I don't deal with the platform myself, but it seems to do the job of delivering the pdf download all over the world in a very efficient way.

UMIP have been completely supportive, helpful and professional. I am free to develop the intellectual content of the product, whilst the commercialisation of the resource is wholly managed by the UMIP.

What advice would you offer to colleagues if they have products/software/resources which they'd like to licence or sell?

That's easy: if you have any innovative ideas, go and discuss them with the people at UMIP.

What's next for The Academic Phrasebank?

I have been talking to the learning development staff at the University Library about the creation of a range of online tasks and exercises to accompany the Academic Phrasebank. We should be able to trial the first of these early next year. With respect to the resource itself, well, there are still many years of work yet to be done and a good deal of research yet to be carried out.

On the commercialisation front, The Academic Phrasebank is now available as a [Kindle download](#), which should be interesting.

The Academic Phrasebank is a general resource for academic writers. It makes explicit the more common phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of academic writing.

Academic Phrasebank

A compendium of commonly used phrasal elements in academic English in PDF format

2015b enhanced edition

Personal Copy

Dr John Morley

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