

英语科技文体中名词作代称特点剖析

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在阅读原版英语科技文献资料中,我们常常遇到如下情况:在一篇文章中或一个段落中,甚至于在一个句子中围绕论题的一两个主题词或关键词不会重复出现,更不会轻易用代词表示,而是由另外的相关名词作代称。这一现象属于英语科技文体的特点,应引起注意,以便在撰写学术论文时避免单调、机械的重复,确保概念精确,逻辑严密。

就语篇的衔接手段而言,名词作代称属于词汇衔接的同现或称搭配(collocation),同现衔接是在篇章中出现相关词项而体现的。这些相关词包括同义词或等义词(synonym)、上义词(superordinate)、表示事物特征的名词、复合词的一个构词成分以及缩略词,还可以用符号代称。

1 同义词或等义词作代称

在专用语中往往按物质结构和性能特点命名,而习惯上对同一事物可能另有约定俗成的称呼,这就构成了等义词。在科技文献中,一般以使用学名为主。英语语言具有丰富的词汇,其中同义词很多。为了达到语言精炼的目的,必须减少不必要的重复,干燥、笨拙的词句显得作者词汇贫乏,缺少写作技巧。

如:刊登在美国《应用光学》杂志上的

文章“Portable Fluorometer Tracks Pollutants”中的一段就出现了若干个同义词(见黑体词):

Scientists who study the ocean often want to know about the organic molecules it contains, to learn about water pollution, say, or to study the effects of fossil-fuel burning on atmospheric carbon. Doing such studies usually involves collecting vials of water and analyzing them in the laboratory. But researchers at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, are using a different technique: a portable fiberoptic **spectrofluorometer**.

“We actually made the measurements in seawater as we tow **the device** behind the boat,” said Robert F. Chen, assistant professor in the university’s environmental, coastal, and ocean sciences department. “No one else has solved the problem of doing this without actually taking samples back to the lab.” He said **the system** is modeled on another used by Stephen Lieberman at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (San Diego, CA), but Lieberman’s device is designed for detection in soil.

《参考译文》:研究海洋的科学家们常

常想知道海水中所含有机分子有多少,想弄清海水的污染程度,比如说研究矿物燃料燃烧时对大气中含碳量的影响。从事这类研究都要涉及到先收集海水,之后拿到实验室里进行分析。但美国麻省大学的研究人员采用了不同的技术,使用的是手提式光纤光谱荧光计。在该大学环境、海岸和海洋科学系任职的助理教授罗伯特·陈说:“我们把荧光计牵引在船尾,直接在海水里进行测定,其他人的唯一办法是将采样带回实验室进行分析。”他还说,这台仪器是仿制空间海战系统司令部斯蒂芬·雷伯曼所使用的那台,但那台装置是为测定土壤所含成分而设计的。

以上例子中, spectrofluorometer — device, spectrofluorometer — system 在特定的语境中构成相对同义词,前者为文中的主题词,后者为替代词。从修辞角度看,同义词可避免重复。由于科技文章的严谨,象 it, they 这样的代词一般不使用。代词在语境中有时显现出替代词义的灵活性或理解的随意性,甚至令人费解或造成曲解。因此,科技英语在遣词造句方面形成了本身的特点,也就是从逻辑推理入手,从同一概念范畴的词汇中,从等义词与同义词中,从内涵上有逻辑联系的词汇中找替代词。

2 上义词作代称

用上义词(superordinate)代替下义词(subordinate),在相关概念上是以大代小,以抽象代具体,以一般代特殊,用涵义较宽的名词代替涵义较窄的名词。就词与词之间的关系来说,即为上下义的关系。在计算机文献检索用的主题词表中体现的是上位词(broad word)和下位词(narrow word)。仅以《光学 精密工程》杂志2003年第三期中的文章“用于移动通信中的新

型微机械贴片天线”的英文摘要为例,说明上义词作代称的可能性。

The rapid development of wireless communications worldwide results in a huge demand for miniaturized **antenna** with excellent performance to send and receive wireless signals to and from communication devices. Microstrip patch **antennas** are used in a variety of applications for their salient features. By sandwiching a layer of Teflon between the silicon wafer and the ground plane, the novel micromachined shortened stacked patch **antenna** printed on high-index wafer has superior performance over those of traditional design, while its bandwidth has been increased by as much as 8.6%, and its length of patch has been miniaturized to only an eighth wavelength. The radiation patterns show that even if **the antenna** is on a ground plane of approximately the size of a handset phone circuit board, most of the radiation is directed away from the user's head, and the wide beamwidth can ensure wide angular coverage. **The antenna** micromachined in a silicon wafer can also be integrated with Si and GaAs IC without affecting any of the circuit requirements.

“antenna”或带修辞语的“antenna”一词在短短的只有165个词的文摘中就出现了5次。重复有时是必要的,有时是令人枯燥的,可考虑把第四个“antenna”替换掉。“antenna”的上位词为 electronic device,建议用电子器件取代天线。一方面避免重复,另一方面也反映出实称和代称之间的隶属关系。