

Adrian Wallwork's AI-Assisted Writing and Presenting in English

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Title: *AI-Assisted Writing and Presenting in English* (English for Academic Research).
Author: Adrian Wallwork
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Despite the hysteria that often follows mentions of AI and the fear that our students may rely on it to the detriment of thinking, there is no doubt it can be a useful tool for work in English. Whether we, as teachers, are happy or not about students using it, there is no doubt that AI's usage will continue to grow and no amount of acting like the fabled King Canute (who tried to hold back the tide), will change that. It is this aspect of AI as instrument which forms the focus of Wallwork's book, and it is not intended as philosophical or social discussion of the possible consequences of AI. It is probably for the best, that we as teachers understand AI and can teach its legitimate use to our students. As Wallwork (v.) explains:

'This volume focuses on how to use AI, specifically large language models (LLMs), to write in English. The book covers how to use LLMs with research papers, emails to fellow academics, cover letters, rebuttal letters, texts for lay audiences, and scripts for presentations. It shows you when you can and cannot trust LLMs to carry out specific tasks.'

The book's principal aim is to demonstrate to students and researchers how to enhance their use of AI to correct their use of English and it is therefore mainly intended for bright, academic-minded students taking EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses. It will be of clear benefit to such learners, although even native speakers may find its approach to using AI useful. In one sense, we all use Word or Grammarly nowadays to check

our English, so AI can be regarded as a next logical step. As well as students and researchers, I think it will also be of use to EAP and English language teachers who want to help their students to improve (see chapter 9). English literature students who are non-native speakers (like mine) will find AI of help to improve English drafts of their writing. Translators who are translating into English but may not be native speakers will also consider the book useful, though in a slightly more abstruse way by showing what they can do which AI can't.

The main skills the book tries to teach are how to write a good prompt (it claims to include 170 examples) for the AI you are using, the value of pre-editing and post-editing of the text to improve the output of an AI-assisted translation. The strengths of this very clear and cogent book are its clear purpose and organisation. Wallwork has clearly thought carefully about how to present the information to his readers. (The book deals with ChatGPT and Google Translate, but I found the techniques he suggests work just as well with Microsoft's Co-pilot.) Wallwork (vi) recommends that the reader has 'an upper intermediate level (B2) of English'. This seems to me about right for a student reading it by themselves, but if a teacher is using it to demonstrate AI technique to a class, then Level B1 for students would probably be acceptable.

Chapter 1, 'Being realistic about what AI can and cannot do', is a salutary reminder that AI (as it currently exists) isn't a real intelligence, despite

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the marketing name. Wallwork offers a robust description of what is possible and what is not.

Chapter 2, 'Prompts for correcting or paraphrasing your English', examines how to write good prompts, without which AI-assistance can be ineffective due to your vagueness.

Chapter 3, 'Pre-editing' explains that to give the AI a chance of success, the writer must pre-edit their text as well as possible.

Chapter 4 'Using a chatbot as a language editor to check your English' is self-explanatory but shows what AI can do well and what it can't as a language editor.

Chapter 5. 'How to interact with a chatbot and simulate typical scenarios that take place in academia' sounds more exciting than it is. It is about how to get a bot to improve your prompts (called 'metaprompting') and to use it for role-playing situations from academic life (such as going for a job interview and preparing typical interview questions in advance). I think this could be useful especially for postgraduate EAP students being interviewed in English.

Chapter 6, 'Communicating with lay audiences' examines how AI can help to prepare presentations or written pieces for people outside your discipline. This is difficult, even for native speakers, as we often know too much as academics, to easily simplify our research and AI's ability to summarise comes into its own here.

This leads into chapter 7, 'Presentations', where again AI's ability to simplify complex information plays to AI's strengths (it must be given the right prompts, of course).

Chapter 8, 'Email and other forms of correspondence' looks at one of the more common uses of AI which is assisting in various forms of communication throughout workplaces.

Chapter 9, 'The added value of a professional editing/ translation service' is different, as it is the first chapter aimed at a very specific audience and will probably only be of interest to them.

Chapter 10, 'For EAP teachers: How to use AI in the classroom' is one of the most valuable and worth rereading, as it clearly shows how teaching the AI skills in chapters 1-8 can make your teaching life easier and improve your students' learning.

This book is a very good start to learning how to use AI to assist in EAP language work of various types, and Wallwork's suggestions and tips for good practice are valuable. It is possible that chapter 1 is already outdated, as the accelerating speed at which AI is improving is formidable. I am sure another edition is already being prepared as I write.

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