Day 1: Sentences

Reading Book: *Style* by Joseph Williams, print or online version

Before workshop

1. Read Chapter 1 from *Style*

2. Read and rank the three example papers

Criteria:

- easy to read
- enjoyable
- how much you learned

Rank:

1. **Ten simple rules for Twitter**

- clear audience and purpose, yet broad and acessible
- thoroughly addresses downsides; casual and accessible style
- bad visuals

2. **When do losses count?**

- meh charts and figures
- casual for a technical piece
- acronyms increase reader burden

3. **Ecological fallacy**

- formal
- verbose
- antiquated
- many characters are concepts

3. Read Chapter 2 from *Style* (Chapters 3 and 4 in the second edition)

Additional reading:

- Chapter 3 — *Writing Science in Plain English*
- Chapter 17.2 — *The Craft of Research*

4. Charcters in example papers

4a. Identify the characters in the introductions of example papers

1. **Ten simple rules for Twitter**
- insurance industry
- losses
- federal agencies
- U.S. government
- we

2. **When do losses count?**
- Twitter
- Twitter users
- researchers
- you
- this article

3. **Ecological fallacy**
- ecological studies
- empirical evidence
- conceptual meaning
- this paper
- issues
- approach

4b. Identify the characters in the following sentence:

"The use of the ecological fallacy to explain the discrepancy between individual and ecological correlations may have unintended consequences." Schwartz, 1994

4c. Rewrite the sentence to conform with the first two principles of clear writing (p. 21 of the online version of *Style*).

Unintended consequences arise when researchers use the ecological fallacy to explain the discrepency between individual and ecological correlations.

4d. Identify the characters in the following sentence:

"For these reasons, using Twitter appropriately can be more than just a social media activity; it can be a real career incubator in which researchers can develop their professional circles, launch new research projects and get helped by the community at various stages of the projects." Cheplygina et al., 2020

4e. Rewrite the sentence to conform with the first two principles of clear writing (p. 21 of the online version of *Style*).

Twitter serves purposes beyond social media. Researchers use Twitter to advance their career by, for example, developing their professional circles, launching new projects, and seeking help from the scientific the community.

5. Characters in manuscript

5a. Identify the characters in a paragraph of your manuscript

R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics that was developed by statisticians and is collaboratively maintained by an international core group of contributors @Rproject2020. Unlike several popular proprietary languages (e.g., MATLAB, SAS, SPSS), R is highly extensible, free and open-source software; the user can access and thus change, extend, and share code for desired applications. Accordingly, a vibrant community of R users has emerged, many of which engage in the development of extensions to the functionality of base R software known as packages. There are plenty of analogies in computing that draw comparisons between programming and culinary arts: recipe structures, coding cookbooks, and the like. To conceptualize packages, imagine you are the chef, R is the kitchen, and packages are the special gadgets which allow you to cook and bake new recipes. R packages are coding delectables that enable the user to perform practical tasks and solve problems with interesting techniques.

5b. Rewrite sentence to violate then conform to first two principles of clear writing (p. 21 of the online version of *Style*)

Violate:

Accordingly, a vibrant community of R users that engages in the development and extensions of the functionality of base R software known as packages has emerged.

Conform:

Accordingly, a vibrant community of R users has emerged, many of whom develop R packages to complement and extend the functionality of base R.

6. Nominalizations

6a. Identify nominalizations in example

"We begin with a description of the validity framework and the definition of key terms." Schwartz, 1994

6b. Rewrite without nominalizations

To begin, we describe the validity framework and define key terms.

6c. Identify and replace nominalizations in manuscript

1. As a natural consequence of the open-source nature of R, there is variation in the quality of different packages among the numerous choices that exist.

   As a natural consequence of the open-source nature of R, the quality of R packages varies considerably, even among those that provide similar tools.

2. Even so, there remain obscure and complicated problems that morph selecting an R package into a barrier despite experience.

   Even so, some obscure and complicated problems might make it difficult to select the best R package for the task, even for an experienced R user.

3. Some repositories impose vetting mechanisms that tame unwieldy aspects of the R ecosystem such as those that regularly check the code that underlies packages and manage corresponding webs of dependencies.

   Some repositories impose vetting mechanisms that tame unwieldy aspects of the R ecosystem by regularly checking underlying code and managing corresponding webs of dependencies.

7. Diagnose, edit and rewrite sentences in a paragraph example

"Natural hazard losses exhibit an upward trend over time. This is a function of increases in wealth and population but is also attributed to better loss accounting in recent years. The escalating pattern of hazard losses is therefore partially an artifact of advances in reporting losses, but how much or how little this effect contributes to the skyrocketing losses in comparison to effects of population growth and increasing wealth in high hazard areas is unclear." Gall et al., 2009

Problems

- verb $\neq$ action
- subject $\neq$ character
- run-on sentences
- passive voice
- nominalizations (use of verb, adjective, etc. as a noun)
- noun +....+ noun

Rewrite

Losses due to natural hazards trend upward over time as a result of increases in wealth, population growth, and recent improvements in loss accounting. Clearly, advances in reporting losses are contributing to the rise in hazard losses; however, we do not know the extent of this effect compared to that of increasing population and wealth in high hazard areas.

After workshop (see manuscript for revisions)

8. Read Chapter 3 from *Style* (Chapter 5 of the second edition)

Additional reading:

- Chapter 7 — *Writing Science in Plain English*

- Chapter 12 — *Writing Science*
- Chapter 17.3 — *The Craft of Research*

9. Identify topics in manuscript; diagnose and revise

10. Read Chapter 4 from *Style* (Chapter 6 of the second edition)