



Directing Interlanguage:

The Presenting Issues of
Grammar at Writing
Centers and a Solution

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About Me

- Univ. of Notre Dame, Class of 2018
- Neuroscience & Behavior
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (conc: Italian)

• Writing Center Tutor

UND Writing Center

- General Writing Center
- Presenter Center
- Community Writing Center
- Academic Services for Student-Athletes
- Writing & Rhetoric Tutorial Program

Common Issues?

- Thesis Statements
- Organization
- Flow of the paper
- **Grammar**

Directing Interlanguage:

The Presenting Issues of Grammar at Writing Centers
and a Solution

What does “Directing” mean in this
context?

What is interlanguage¹?

¹ Selinker, L. 1972. Interlanguage. *IRAL*. 10, 209-31.



Directing Interlanguage: **The Presenting Issues of Grammar at Writing Centers** and a Solution

- Mechanical Level
 - Usage errors, missing articles
- Sentence Level²
 - Run-on sentences, excessive clauses
- Paragraph Level
 - Harder to pinpoint, improper voice/style

Directing Interlanguage:

The Presenting Issues of Grammar at Writing Centers
and **a Solution**

- A good resource to 'solve' these issues must:
 - Help prepare for a session
 - Supplement a session
 - Help create a plan for revision
 - Provide extra resources (if necessary)



Revising your paper

Tips to improve your writing process,
organization, and grammar

Before you submit your paper...

- ◆ Reverse outline
Read it out loud
- ◆ Check anything that
sounds wrong, but
DON'T stop reading
- ◆ Look back at your
class/reading notes
- ◆ Reflect on where you
need to improve



Front Panel

- Model the tutorial process
- SLA-Theory:
 - Lower affective filter³
 - Output hypothesis³



Revising your paper

Tips to improving your writing process,
organization, and grammar

Before you submit your paper...

- ❖ Reverse outline
- ❖ Read it *out loud*
- ❖ Mark anything that sounds wrong, but *DON'T* stop reading
- ❖ Look back at your class/reading notes
- ❖ Reflect on where you need to improve

Inside Panel

Questions to incite metalinguistic feedback:

- Mechanical Level
- Sentence Level
- Paragraph Level

After following these five steps, you are ready to start revising!

Ask yourself:

- Was I able to read my paper without taking unexplained pauses?
- Did my sentences make sense alone, but seem out of place with the paragraph?
- Is there anything I can still do to improve my grammar?

Now use the questions on the inside cover to identify on which level you should focus!

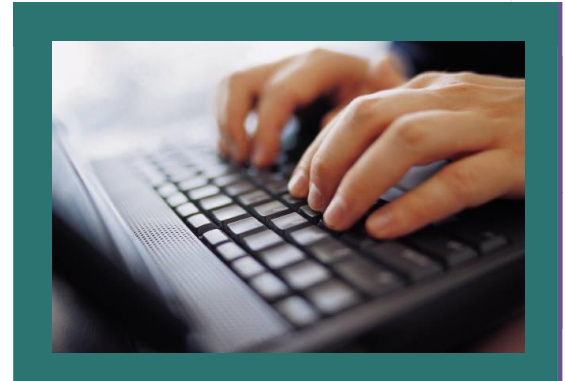
*this box is on the inside panel

Mechanical Level

Was I able to read my paper
without taking unexplained pauses?

SLA-Theory:

- Explicit instruction⁴



Mechanical Level

*If your answer to the first question was **NO**... you might want to take a look at your grammar on the mechanical level.*

Problems on this level might look like:

- ▷ Incomplete sentences
- ▷ Missing prepositions and articles

As you revise:

- ▷ Keep an online grammar "Cheat Sheet" open on your laptop while you edit
- ▷ Continue reading drafts aloud!
- ▷ Meet with an English Language tutor to discuss tactics for your writing.
- ▷ Look online for explanations of grammar rules

Sentence Level

Did my sentences make sense alone, but seem out of place with the paragraph?

SLA-Theory:

- Implicit instruction⁴
- Communicative Language Teaching⁵

Sentence Level

*If your answer to the second question was **NO**... you might want to take a look at your grammar on the sentence level*

Problems on this level look like:

- ▷ Run-on sentences
- ▷ Missing ideas, choppy sentences, & unclear ideas

As you revise:

- ▷ Compare your reverse outline to what you expect from your argument.
- ▷ Practice writing longer passages: keep a journal or write for pleasure, experience writing longer sentences will help you develop 'academic grammar.'
- ▷ Consider finding a pen-pal with whom you can practice informal writing.

⁴Cowen, R. (2008) *The Teacher's Grammar of English*. Pg. 31-3

⁵Savignon, S. (1991). *Communicative Language Teaching: State of the Art*.

Paragraph Level

Is there anything I can still do to improve my grammar?

SLA-Theory:

- 'Show & Tell Essays' or Mentor Texts⁶
- Task-Based Language Teaching⁷

Paragraph Level

*If your answer to the third question was **NO**... you might want to take a look at your grammar on the paragraph level.*

Problems on this level look like:

- ▷ Informal/non-academic writing
- ▷ Missing the proper 'voice'

For this paper:

- ▷ Check out sample essays for your discipline, how do they compare to your draft?
- ▷ Keep in mind your audience, how have you addressed them?

To avoid these mistakes in the future:

- ▷ Practice your persuasive writing: making arguments and engaging in academic discourse is one of the hardest things to do in the English language.
- ▷ Meet with your professors; ask for feedback on your writing (even if it's not a 'writing' class).

⁶Zuidema, L. (2012). The Grammar Workshop. Pg. 63-71.

⁷Long, M. (2016). *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching*.

Resources

- General Online Resources
- Resources specific to Notre Dame
- English Language Tutoring
- Note to tutors

Remember that writing is a process—while this pamphlet will help you start to think about your writing, the best way to get help is through talking with tutors and professors!

Here are some free resources available to you as Notre Dame students!

Purdue OWL

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Center for the Study of Language and Culture

<http://cslc.nd.edu/>

English for Academic Purposes

<http://cslc.nd.edu/programs/eap/>

University Writing Center

<http://writingcenter.nd.edu/>

A note to tutors:

This pamphlet is especially helpful to pinpoint specific concerns of a student/tutee—to maximize the efficacy of a session or to identify the global concerns of a paper, these three levels integrate a non-directive style and the tutoring instruction consistent with the mission of Notre Dame's University Writing Center.

This pamphlet was last updated 10/23/16 by D. Aciri. The information in this packet should be used for educational purposes only.

Feedback from Tutors

“The division of levels was particularly helpful to grasp the arduous task of paper writing.”

“The three questions [put forward] are incredibly thought provoking and helpful.”

When would you use this?

72% Agree or Strongly Agree
with...

“This pamphlet offers strategies that I would not have offered.”

18% Before session
45% During session
27% After session
9% Independently

Thank you
to...



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The Center for the Study of
Languages and Cultures

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