

Style Guide for "Exploring Feature and Behavioral Drift in Requirements Gathering Over Time: Syntax-Locked vs. Syntax-Free Methodologies"

1. Tone and Voice

- **Academic and Formal:** The tone should be formal, reflecting the research-oriented nature of the paper. Avoid conversational language, slang, or contractions.
- **Objective and Neutral:** The writing should remain unbiased, presenting facts and findings without personal opinions or subjective language.

2. Structure and Organization

- **Section Headings:** Use a hierarchical numbering system for sections (e.g., 1.0, 1.1, 1.1.1) to organize content clearly.
- **Consistency in Section Titles:** Ensure section titles are parallel in structure (e.g., "Background and Motivation," "Problem Statement," "Objectives of the Study").
- **Abstract:** Should be a concise summary of the study, covering the purpose, methodology, key findings, and implications in approximately 150-250 words.
- **Introduction:** Begin with a broad introduction to the topic, narrowing down to the specific research question and objectives.
- **Literature Review:** Provide a critical synthesis of existing research, identifying gaps that your study addresses.
- **Methodology:** Detailed but concise description of the research design, data collection, and analysis methods. Justify all methodological choices.
- **Results:** Present findings clearly with appropriate use of tables, figures, and statistical data. Avoid interpreting results in this section.
- **Discussion:** Interpret the results in the context of the literature review. Discuss implications, limitations, and potential for future research.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize key findings, their implications, and suggest directions for future research.
- **Appendices:** Include supplementary material (e.g., raw data, additional figures) that supports but does not interrupt the main text.

3. Language and Terminology

- **Technical Terms:** Clearly define all technical terms and acronyms at first mention. Use consistent terminology throughout the paper (e.g., "syntax-locked" vs. "syntax-free").
- **Avoid Jargon:** Where possible, avoid jargon or overly complex language. Aim for clarity and precision.
- **Numbers and Statistics:** Write out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. Use consistent formatting for statistical data (e.g., p-values, confidence intervals).

4. Figures and Tables

- **Numbering:** Number all figures and tables sequentially (e.g., Figure 1, Table 1) and refer to them by these numbers in the text.
- **Captions:** Provide clear, descriptive captions for all figures and tables. Captions should explain the content without requiring reference to the text.
- **Placement:** Place figures and tables as close as possible to the relevant text. Ensure they do not disrupt the flow of reading.
- **Citations:** If a figure or table is adapted from another source, provide a full citation in the caption.

5. Citations and References

- **Citation Style:** Use a consistent citation style throughout the paper. For example, APA, MLA, or IEEE, depending on your academic field.
- **In-text Citations:** Include in-text citations for all referenced material. For paraphrased content, include the author(s) and year; for direct quotes, add the page number as well.
- **Reference List:** At the end of the paper, include a full reference list of all cited works, formatted according to the chosen citation style. Ensure consistency in formatting.

6. Formatting and Typography

- **Font:** Use a standard, readable font such as Times New Roman, 12-point size.
- **Margins and Spacing:** Use 1-inch margins on all sides. Double-space the text, including block quotes, and single-space within tables and figures.
- **Paragraphs:** Indent the first line of each paragraph by 0.5 inches. Do not add extra space between paragraphs.
- **Headings:** Use bold for section headings and italics for subheadings. Ensure consistent formatting for all headings and subheadings.

7. Consistency

- **Spelling:** Use American English spelling consistently throughout the paper (e.g., "behavior" instead of "behaviour").
- **Abbreviations:** Spell out abbreviations on the first use with the abbreviation in parentheses. Use the abbreviation consistently thereafter.
- **Tense:** Use past tense for the methodology and results sections, and present tense for discussing implications and current understanding.

8. Proofreading and Editing

- **Grammar and Punctuation:** Carefully proofread for grammatical errors, typos, and punctuation mistakes. Use tools like Grammarly or have a peer review your work.
- **Consistency Checks:** Review the paper for consistency in terminology, citation style, and formatting. Ensure all references are accurate and complete.
- **Clarity and Conciseness:** Aim for clear, concise writing. Remove any redundant or unnecessary information.