A handout handout
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0. Introduction

Goals of talk:
- discuss some issues that arise in handout creation
- defend the right theory against competitors

Roadmap:
1. Purposes of a handout
2. Overall layout of a handout
3. Handout text

1. Purposes of a handout

<u>Before the talk: for the speaker</u>
- ***tool for organizing your presentation:*** figure out what to include, what to omit, what to demote to an appendix, etc.

  → **be super clear and transparent**
- ***stress reduction device for giving the talk***: include almost all the information you will need to give the talk

  → **be complete**

<u>During the talk: for the audience</u>
- ***following along***: handout should summarize current points and relevant data (obvious)

  → **be complete**
- ***not following along***: permit listener to (i) linger on a point or (ii) look back/ahead— and then catch up   → **be super clear and transparent**

<u>During the talk: for the speaker</u>
- ***stick to the plan, trust your handout:***

  → **be complete**
  → **be super clear and transparent**

(1) **Corollaries of "trust your handout"**
   a. Do not improvise!
   c. Do not {solve, even mention} problems that suddenly occur to you at the podium.
   d. Know in advance which sections to skip if you are running short of time.

<u>After the talk: everyone</u>
- ***gist reconstructible from the handout***

  → **be complete**
  → **be super clear and transparent**

(2) **Summary of handout purposes**

	<u>be complete</u>	*<u>be super clear & transparent</u>*
before talk: speaker	✓	✓
during talk: audience	✓	✓
during talk: speaker	✓	✓
after talk: everyone	✓	✓

(3)   **CSCT Generalization:**
multiple reasons to make your handout *complete*, *super clear*, and *transparent*.

2. Overall layout of a handout

<u>Page layout</u>
- **Two-pages to a sheet** improves clarity, though non-optimal for those who want larger type. Compromise as needed or prepare multiple versions as is customary in our department
- Take care with **column and page breaks:** if a section ends too close to a column or page break, try to make them coincide.

<u>Sections</u>
- **Use clear sectioning, but don't overdo it.**
  - Organize the handout into **numbered** *sections* (and perhaps numbered *subsections*) — whose headings are **clearly distinguishable typographically**.
  - Helpful to divide sections and subsections divided by distinct types of **horizontal lines**. This handout uses double vs. occasional single horizontal lines.
- Below the section or subsection level, adopt **consistent typographical conventions** to make the internal structure clear to the listener/reader — without being overly fussy.
  - **This handout:** boldfaced underlined subsection headings at left margin (where relevant), otherwise bullets at two levels.
  - **Your handout:** find a style that works for you, so long as you internalize the rules you make up and keep things as consistent as possible.

<u>Examples, tables, and graphs</u>
- **Use the automatic example numbering capabilities of Word, LaTex or whatever**
  - Not that your audience will know or care (thus does not follow from CSCT) ...
  - ... but it will make handout creation *much* easier for you.
  - (Note the "..." convention I followed above.)
  - Same goes for papers, of course.
  - Too many sub-bullets here, I think.

- **Avoid overuse of abbreviatory conventions in examples**

(4) **Abbreviatory conventions (Chomsky 1955)**
    a. Nobody *(can) be (*much) sure what is intended {*(by), ??(with} this example.
    b. This is another ((probably) irrelevant) example illustrating the same thing.

- **Make sure graphs are large enough to be read (and do not rely on colors)**

3. Handout text

<u>**Avoid excessive terseness**</u>

- **Less likely to be a flaw these days...**
    - ... but once upon a time, there was a handout style that was just a set of numbered examples and reformulations of the definition of "bound"...
    - ... which violates Completeness, a subcase of CSCT

(3) **CSCT Generalization:**
    multiple reasons to make your handout *complete*, *super clear*, and *transparent*.

    - *Arguably*: also violates "super clear" and "transparent".

<u>**Avoid excessive wordiness**</u>

- There is a common handout style, found in many talks, that includes full, well-rounded paragraphs in the handout, as if one was reading a paper (or a book chapter or other full, non-handout presentation). (See Pesetsky 2020, Aravind et al. 2019, a.o. for further discussion of this difficult question.) Many excellent talks have been accompanied by handouts with this property, so it is clearly not lethal, but it has the disadvantage of making it more difficult for a reader — especially an audience member temporarily not following along (see section 1 of the present handout) — to efficiently absorb material presented in this fashion.

- If you have to read a paragraph with subordinate clauses and parentheticals while simultaneously listening to a talk — for example, when trying to catch up after lingering, going back, or flipping forward — you will find it is quite difficult. That is why in general it is better to make the extra effort to proceed as described below.

- **Use short sentences and sentence fragments (e.g. bare APs or NPs) instead:**
  succinct and clear → easier satisfaction of CSCT (cf. (3))[1]

<u>**Use typography to bring out main points and newly introduced terms**</u>

- **Italics:**
    - most useful for in-text citation of forms and examples, such as *sobaka* 'dog', as per standard style sheets
    - or if you *really* want to emphasize something!

- **Boldface:**
    - great for highlighting a phrase that makes it clear what a particular bullet is really about, i.e. its **topic** or **main point**
    - preferred (by me, at least) when introducing a new **technical term** or useful abbreviatory convention (henceforth **UAC**) — makes it easier for the listener to look back and refresh memory about what the UAC stands for
    - useful for **subsection headings**, perhaps with underlining as here

- **Adopt simple and consistent conventions for your handout that work for *you***
    - ***Too*** much use of <u>unconstrained</u> and *distinct* **typographical** STYLES makes the handout <u>hard to</u> read.
    - Here is a second sub-bullet, because you should avoid having only one.

Appendix: Implications for E-type pronouns and Richness of the Base

- **As far as we can tell**: *none*.

but:

- Nothing wrong with including a section that belongs in the talk ...
- ... but you indicate that you will not have time for it ...
    - either by making it an appendix (flagging its existence in the body of the handout at the appropriate spot)
    - or including it as a handout section and just skipping it (or marking it as "to be skipped")
- **Virtues:** listeners know you thought this through, can ask questions about it
- **Worry not to have:** not a CSCT violation

(5) **An example for no reason except to have one**
    a. This is a sentence of English.
    b. *This not is a sentence of English.
    c. *Nor this is either.

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[1] David Pesetsky (personal communication) does not recommend including footnotes in a handout, though there are worse crimes.

References

Nordgård, Torbjørn. 1985. *Word order, binding and the Empty Category Principle.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Trondheim.

Nunes, Jairo. 2008. Inherent case as a licensing condition for A-movement: The case of hyper-raising constructions in Brazilian Portuguese. *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* 7:83–108. URL https://jpl. letras.ulisboa.pt/articles/10.5334/jpl.129/galley/138/download/.

Oseki, Yohei, and Yoichi Miyamoto. 2014. Some consequences of simplest merge and phi-defectiveness in Japanese. *Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on Altaic Formal Linguistics* (WAFL 10) 10:217–228.