

LIN 405 - Writing in Linguistics

Summer 2021 - Scott Nelson

Types of Linguistics Writing

- Macaulay (2011) lists the following:

1. Term Paper
2. Thesis
3. Qualifying Paper
4. Proposal
5. Dissertation
6. Review
7. Abstract
8. Conference Paper
9. Squib
10. Journal Article
11. Book

Term Paper

- Written for a class/seminar
- Limited scope due to time constraints
- Often overlaps with squibs
- Can later be turned into conference paper/journal article

Theses

- BA Thesis
 - typically some type of capstone project
 - required for honors program at SBU
- MA Thesis
 - typically an extended/longer term paper

Qualifying Paper/Proposal/Dissertation

- Part of graduate program so beyond our focus
- QP is usually a fleshed out term paper that is required to be presented at a conference or submitted to a journal for publication
- Macaulay talks about two types of proposals
 1. Dissertation proposal - writing about what you're going to write about
 2. Grant proposal - like a diss proposal but for money instead of a PhD.
- Dissertation is a book length piece of writing required to obtain a PhD.

Review

- Literature Review
 - Typically a section in a journal article or chapter in thesis/dissertation
 - Can stand alone as well (often appear as a book chapter)
- Book Review
 1. Note: announcement of book release
 2. Review: brief summary/evaluation
 3. Review article: longer; includes outside sources/further discussion

Abstract

- In general an abstract is a summary of a longer piece of writing
- Typically used as a way to determine acceptance into a conference
- Also used in journal articles to inform readers what the paper is about
- Can vary in length depending on purpose/venue
 - Usually a pre-determined number of words or page count

Conference Paper

- Usually delivered orally (10-15 minutes)
- Written version is often published as a proceedings paper
- Computational subfields place greater value on conference papers since the field moves very quickly

Squib

- Squibs are short papers that offer a new analysis of previously published data
- Some journals publish squibs/similar short papers
- Term papers and squibs occasionally overlap

Journal Article

- The end goal of term papers, qualifying papers, and conference papers
- These are largely considered the "best" type of publications for people in academia
- Usually require a peer-review process where other scholars in the field determine the legitimacy and worthiness of the paper

Book/Monograph

- A monograph is a book length treatment of a single topic
- In linguistics these often grow out of dissertations (but not exclusively!)

Writing Basics

- Finding a Topic
- Background Research
- Library Resources
- The Scientific Method
- Steps in an argument
- Mistakes to Avoid
- Respect
- Plagiarism

Finding a Topic/Background Research/Library Resources

- We will spend a later class discussing these in more detail...
- Poll on knowledge of linguistics journals.
- Have you asked yourself the questions from approach 4 (pp. 35-36)?

The Scientific Method

- Choose a problem
- Research your problem
- Develop a hypothesis
- Figure out the procedure you will need to follow
- Test your hypothesis
- Organize your data
- State your conclusions

Steps in an argument

- State the claim you are making
- Introduce supporting evidence
- Explain how the evidence supports your claim

Mistakes to avoid

- Don't confuse the notion of making an argument with the notion of having an argument
- Don't present supporting data without explaining why the data support the claim
- Don't argue against a straw man
- Don't hedge
- Don't claim something is an argument when it is really only an observation

Respect

- Try to avoid ripping into other authors even if you disagree with their work
- These people aren't idiots, they often just have a different perspective
- Avoid sexist and other harmful language

Plagiarism

- "In North American academic culture, any time we use an author's ideas and/or words, failure to provide the source (and to use quotation marks where exact wording is copied) is considered the gravest of academic sins."
- word for word plagiarism vs. mosaic plagiarism

References

Macaulay, M. A. (2011). *Surviving linguistics: a guide for graduate students.*
Cascadilla Press.