Session 1 Introducing Your Research in Theses and Journal Articles

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this session, students should be able to:

- recognize the course structure, rationale and assessments
- identify various thesis and journal article structures
- identify the functions, rhetorical moves, key components and the linguistic features of an effective introduction of a thesis/journal article in their own disciplines
- write a centrality statement to highlight the significance of their research within their fields
- deploy appropriate linguistic features and rhetorical moves to write an introduction for their own research; and
- introduce their research to a non-specialist audience verbally

Warm-up Task

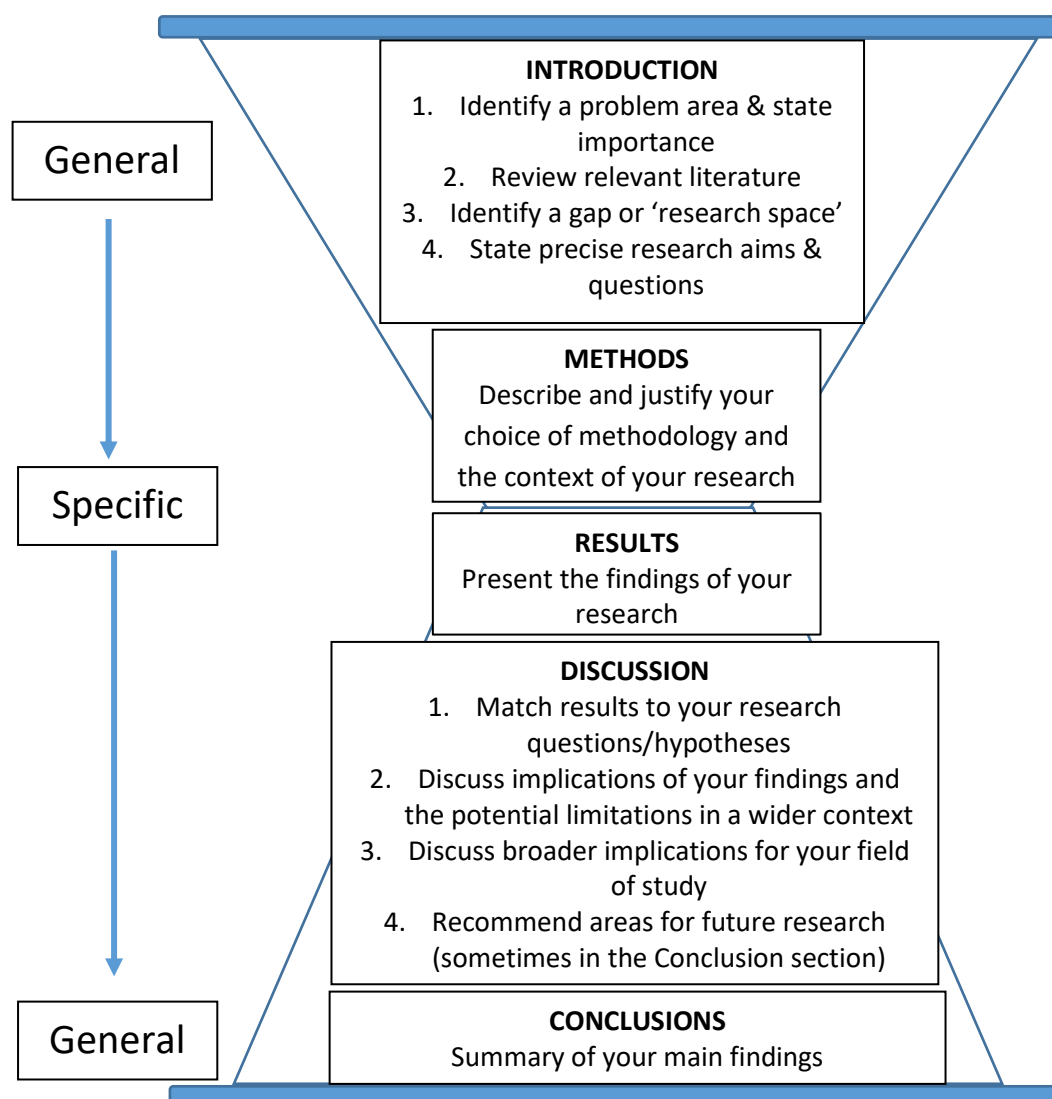What do you know about the structure of a typical thesis and journal article in your discipline?

1. Work with a classmate who is also from your discipline, if possible. List the key sections of a typical journal article and key chapters of a thesis in your discipline.

2. Do you think the thesis and journal article structure are the same for all disciplines? What might be the variations across disciplines? Why?

Structure of a Thesis/Journal Article

A thesis/journal article is a record of research work which usually involves five major stages: (a) identifying a research area, (b) setting research questions which have not yet been sufficiently addressed by previous research, (c) designing a study that will seek to provide answers to the research questions and carrying it out, (d) collecting data, collating, analyzing and interpreting results and (e) drawing conclusions or generalizations from your findings. The structure of a thesis and a journal article usually follows the sequence of these five stages:

Introduction → Literature Review → Methods → Results → Discussion → Conclusion

The 'Hourglass' Thesis Model Based on Primary Research

General

INTRODUCTION
1. Identify a problem area & state importance
2. Review relevant literature
3. Identify a gap or 'research space'
4. State precise research aims & questions

Specific

METHODS
Describe and justify your choice of methodology and the context of your research

RESULTS
Present the findings of your research

DISCUSSION
1. Match results to your research questions/hypotheses
2. Discuss implications of your findings and the potential limitations in a wider context
3. Discuss broader implications for your field of study
4. Recommend areas for future research (sometimes in the Conclusion section)
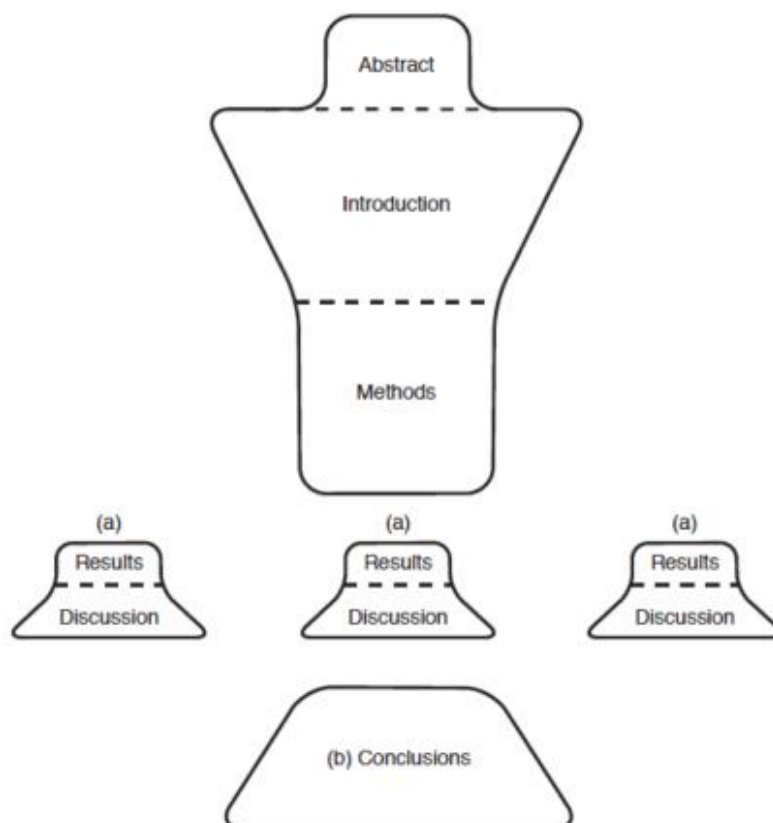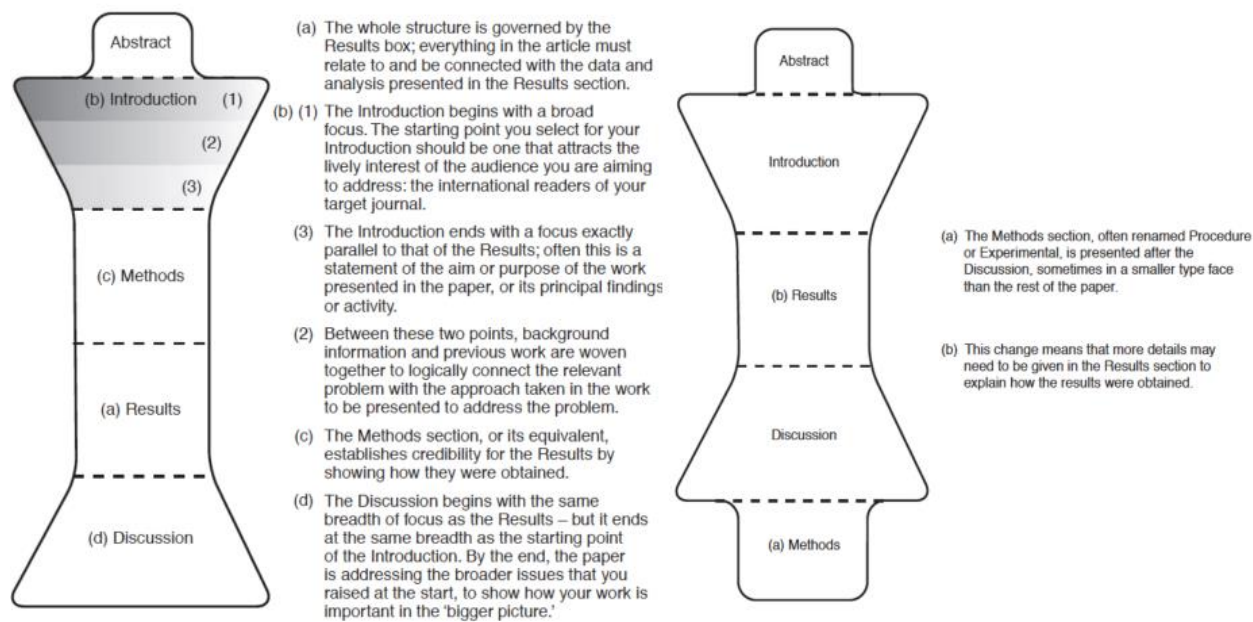
General

CONCLUSIONS
Summary of your main findings

Task 1

The structure of a thesis/journal article can vary, depending on the nature of your research. Get into groups of 4 and do the following:

1. Have you seen any other thesis/journal article structures in addition to the IMRD format?

2. Tell your group members the typical thesis/journal article structure in your discipline. Why do you think this structure is particularly common in your discipline?

Other possible journal article structures:

Abstract

(b) Introduction   (1)
                     (2)
                     (3)

(c) Methods

(a) Results

(d) Discussion

(a) The whole structure is governed by the Results box; everything in the article must relate to and be connected with the data and analysis presented in the Results section.

(b) (1) The Introduction begins with a broad focus. The starting point you select for your Introduction should be one that attracts the lively interest of the audience you are aiming to address: the international readers of your target journal.

(3) The Introduction ends with a focus exactly parallel to that of the Results; often this is a statement of the aim or purpose of the work presented in the paper, or its principal findings or activity.

(2) Between these two points, background information and previous work are woven together to logically connect the relevant problem with the approach taken in the work to be presented to address the problem.

(c) The Methods section, or its equivalent, establishes credibility for the Results by showing how they were obtained.

(d) The Discussion begins with the same breadth of focus as the Results – but it ends at the same breadth as the starting point of the Introduction. By the end, the paper is addressing the broader issues that you raised at the start, to show how your work is important in the 'bigger picture.'

Abstract

Introduction

(b) Results

Discussion

(a) Methods

(a) The Methods section, often renamed Procedure or Experimental, is presented after the Discussion, sometimes in a smaller type face than the rest of the paper.

(b) This change means that more details may need to be given in the Results section to explain how the results were obtained.

Abstract

Introduction

Methods

(a)
Results
Discussion

(a)
Results
Discussion

(a)
Results
Discussion

(b) Conclusions

(a) The Results and Discussion are presented together in a single combined section; each result is presented, followed immediately by the relevant discussion.

(b) This change means that a separate section is needed at the end to bring the different pieces of discussion together; it is often headed Conclusions.

Students' Theses on HKBU Library Website: https://scholars.hkbu.edu.hk/en/studentTheses/

Take a look at the former HKBU MPhil and PhD students' theses to learn about the structure, language features and styles of theses in your discipline.

Introducing Your Research

Introducing your research effectively is a critical skill for any researcher. A well-crafted introduction **sets the stage** for your work, helping your audience understand the **significance of your study**, how it **fits into existing knowledge**, and **why it matters**. Whether you are writing the introduction section of a manuscript or presenting your research verbally, a clear and compelling introduction **engages your audience and establishes your credibility**. To make your introduction effective, it is important to provide **context**, articulate your **research problem** clearly, and **highlight the contribution** your work makes to your field. Mastering this skill not only strengthens your communication but also ensures your research makes a lasting impact.

Task 2

Functions, Key Component and Language Features of an 'INTRODUCTION'

This task aims to check your prior knowledge about writing an effective introduction of a thesis/journal article in your discipline. Get a partner and discuss the *'functions', 'key components', 'structure' and the 'language features'* of the introduction of a thesis/journal article in your discipline. Put your ideas in the space provided in the table below.

If your partner is from a different discipline, find out the possible variations across disciplines.

	The 'Introduction' of a THESIS / JOURNAL ARTICLE
Functions	
Key Components and Structure	
Language Features (e.g. tenses, voices, use of technical terms or keywords)	

Questions for further discussion:

1. What are the possible disciplinary variations in the content (*e.g. the key components)*, structure (*e.g. length, number of moves*), and language features (*e.g. tenses, active vs passive voice, use of technical jargon*) of the introduction of a thesis/journal article?

2. Are there any possible differences between the introduction of a thesis and of a journal article in your own discipline?

INTRODUCTION of a Thesis/Journal Article

A good INTRODUCTION should lead the reader from a general research issue or problem to your specific area of research. It puts your research question in context by explaining the significance of the research being conducted. It should also lay out a roadmap for the rest of the thesis/journal article. The main purposes of an introduction are to:

- draw your readers in *(introduces the topic)*
- provide background information *(briefly mentions some key previous studies)*
- convince readers that your work is worth reading *(highlight the potential contributions of your work)*
- give direction to the remainder of the thesis/journal article *(give an outline)*

The Creating a Research Space (CARS) model, which highlights the key rhetorical moves (organizational patterns) in the introduction of a research paper/thesis, was developed by John Swales (1990) based on his analysis of journal articles representing a variety of discipline-based writing. In this model, there are three main moves:

Rhetorical Moves	Writing Actions
Move 1: Establishing a Territory [the situation]	1. Describe the research problem and provide evidence to support why the topic is important to study. 2. Explain the current state of knowledge, consensus, practice or description of phenomena. 3. Synthesise the key prior research that further supports the need to study the research problem; this is different from a literature review in a way that only the key previous studies which have touched upon but not fully addressed the topic are included.
Move 2: Establishing a Niche [the problem]	1. Introduce an opposing viewpoint/perspective to the current state of knowledge; or 2. Develop the research problem around a gap/an understudied area of the literature; or 3. Present key questions about the consequences of gaps in prior research that will be addressed by your study; or 4. Extend prior research to expand upon or clarify a research problem.
Move 3: Occupying the Niche [the solution]	1. Explain clearly the objectives of your study. 2. Present a brief summary of the key findings of your study. 3. Indicate how the remainder of the paper is organized.

If you would like to know more about the CARS model, you may read:

Swales, J.M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Claiming Centrality of Your Research Topic

Research articles and thesis introductions always begin with centrality statements because they help 'establish the general territory' [Move 1 in the CARS model] of the research topic. A centrality statement basically makes a general claim that your research topic area is of central interest or importance in the field, or sometimes in the world at large. These claims have four main features:

1. Characterised by the use of **evaluative adjectives** *e.g. valuable, central, major, important*
2. Referring to the **impacts and a growing awareness of a problem** *e.g. increasingly, growing, a classic problem*
3. Showing the **currency of the topic** *e.g. current, recent, recently*
4. Using an **inversion pattern** *e.g. Particularly noteworthy/significant is that…, Of great/common concern is that…*
5. Stated in **present/present perfect tense**

Some examples of centrality statements:

- Recently, there has been a wide interest in…
- The study of…has become an important aspect of…
- The relationship between…has been studied by many researchers in the field.

Task 3

Read the two excerpts below which are extracted from the introductions of two academic journal articles (in the fields of Chemistry and Social Sciences). Discuss the following questions with a partner:

1. Can you identify the centrality statements in the excerpts? How did the authors establish the general territory of the research topic?

Excerpt 1

INTRODUCTION

Organic electronics have drawn enormous attention in the past few decades owing to the ease of processing, ultralow-cost substrates, lightweight properties, thin film flexibility and tunable functionality.[1] Integration of photochromic properties with organic electronics has been a tempting approach to accomplish photo-responsive multifunctional optoelectronics.[2] Several pioneering projects that focused on the development of organic electronics embedded with photochromic layers have brought photochromic materials much closer to having real electronic applications in the foreseeable future.[3] In fact, thermal irreversibility and fatigue resistance are especially desirable prerequisites regarding the long-term stability and photo-switching cyclability of photochromic materials for optoelectronic applications. Solid state of thin film photochromic properties are essential for the practical application of photo-responsive optoelectronics. In contrast to crystalline photochromism, which has been well-studied for potential applications in light-driven molecular machines,[4] thin film photochromism adopted in photo-modulated organic electronics has not been comprehensively investigated for its photochromic properties.

[paragraphs taken out]

Source: Wu, N.M.W., Wong, H.L., & Yam, V.W.W. (2017). Photochromic benzo[*b*]phosphole oxide with excellent thermal irreversibility and fatigue resistance in the thin film solid state via direct attachment of dithienyl units to the weakly aromatic heterocycle. *Chemical Science, 8*, 1309-1315.

Excerpt 2

INTRODUCTION

A considerable amount of literature has analysed how the transition to retirement affects subjective well-being (SWB). Older research has reported contradictory results, with no clear findings as to whether retirement had a positive, negative or no general effect on SWB (e.g., Gall et al., 1997; Isaksson & Johansson, 2000; Richardson and Kilty, 1991; Warr et al., 2004). Evidence from more recent studies has highlighted that trajectories of SWB in the post-retirement phase of life show no single universal pattern. Instead, SWB post-retirement depends on a number of protective- and risk-factors that vary across social groups and individuals (e.g., Bender, 2012; Calvo et al., 2009; Pinquart and Schindler, 2007; van Solinge and Henkens, 2005, 2007, 2008; Wang, 2007; Wetzel et al., 2016). Specifically, influencing factors such as economic, social and personal resources (e.g., socio-economic status, marital status, health) as well as the situational context in which retirement takes place (e.g., timing and voluntariness of retirement) can enhance or hamper SWB in the post-work phase of life (van Solinge, 2013).

Source: Schmälzle, M., Wetzel, M., & Huxhold, O. (2019). Pathways to retirement: Are they related to patterns of short- and long-term subjective well-being? *Social Science Research, 77*, 214-229.

2. Can you come up with one or two centrality statements for your own thesis topic? You can use the academic phrasebank (http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introducing-work/) and ChatGPT to help you. After you finish, show your centrality statements to a partner and get comments.

3. Ask ChatGPT for some comments on your centrality statements. You may input prompts such as "*My research is about… (your research focus). I am writing centrality statements to highlight the importance of the research topic in the field of … (your research field). Can you suggest how the following centrality statements can be improved?*"

   "*What are some common phrases and language features used in centrality statements?*"

   > **Note:** Although ChatGPT is a useful tool, it may not always give you reliable and accurate information. You need to use your own critical judgement to evaluate ChatGPT's responses. Additionally, you should not ask ChatGPT to write your centrality statements because you understand the importance and novelty of your research topic much better than ChatGPT does.

Task 4

Read the two sample introductions extracted from two journal articles in the fields of Chemistry and Social Sciences respectively. Identify the rhetorical moves and the linguistic features.

1. Can you identify the rhetorical moves in the introductions? Are the moves similar or different in the two introductions?

2. To what extent are the moves in the two introductions similar to the CARS model proposed by Swales (1990)?

3. What do you notice about the linguistic features (e.g. tenses, voices, technical jargon) of the introductions?

4. What are the phrases used for pointing out the gaps in the existing literature?

5. What are the phrases used for highlighting the significance of the research?

Sample 1

INTRODUCTION

Organic electronics have drawn enormous attention in the past few decades owing to the ease of processing, ultralow-cost substrates, lightweight properties, thin film flexibility and tunable functionality.[1] Integration of photochromic properties with organic electronics has been a tempting approach to accomplish photo-responsive multifunctional optoelectronics.[2] Several pioneering projects that focused on the development of organic electronics embedded with photochromic layers have brought photochromic materials much closer to having real electronic applications in the foreseeable future.[3] In fact, thermal irreversibility and fatigue resistance are especially desirable prerequisites regarding the long-term stability and photo-switching cyclability of photochromic materials for optoelectronic applications. Solid state of thin film photochromic properties is essential for the practical application of photo-responsive optoelectronics. In contrast to crystalline photochromism, which has been well-studied for potential applications in light-driven molecular machines,[4] thin film photochromism adopted in photo-modulated organic electronics has not been comprehensively investigated for its photochromic properties.

Among the photochromic compounds,[5] diarylethenes have been regarded as one of the most attractive photochromic compounds given their promising thermal irreversibility, fatigue resistance and ability to carry out solid state photo-chromism. Various photochromic diarylethenes with different photo-controlled functions have been reported. However, most of the research has been confined to carrying out modifications of pendant aryl units attached to the perfluorocyclopentene backbone.[3-6] A number of researchers have been expanding the structural diversity and functionality by incorporating diarylethene moieties into various heterocycles such as 1, 10-phenanthroline,[7] imidazole,[8] thiophene,[9] thiazole,[10] benzo[b] thiophene[11] and thiophene-fused heteroacenes.[12] However, a number of the aforementioned diarylethenes usually suffered from less than satisfactory practical thermal stability in the photogenerated closed form as well as a reduction in their robust fatigue resistance during photochromic cycles.

[a paragraph describing the recent development of the topic was taken out]

Despite these exciting developments, there is still room for improvement and there is a need for research that will enable understanding for the rational design of heterocyclic-fused diarylethenes with promising photochromic behavior, particularly those heterocycles that could be easily functionalized and derivatized.

[a paragraph describing the recent studies on phospholes was taken out]

With our continuous interest in designing various photochromic materials,[7-9,12,14,18] we envisioned that the direct attachment of two thienyl rings onto the phosphole ring would offer a strategy to optimize the photochromic performance of the system. Although phosphole-containing photochromic compounds have been reported previously,[18] the photochromic bis-thienyl units are not directly attached onto the ethane unit of the phosphole ring to take advantage of the low aromaticity of phosphole, and to the best of our knowledge, exploration of the direct attachment of the two thienyl units to the phosphole ring has never been reported. In addition, studies on the photochromic properties of thin films of fused-heterocycle diarylethenes under ambient conditions

are still not as extensively explored as those of the perfluorocyclopentene analogues. It is envisaged that the demonstration of thin film photochromism with excellent thermal irreversibility and with the fatigue resistance of fused-heterocycle diarylethenes could offer alternative promising candidates for future potential applications in photoswitching and optical memory devices.

[a paragraph describing the focus of the present study was taken out]

The present work provides important insights and guiding principles into the molecular design of photochromic diarylethene systems with excellent thermal irreversibility and fatigue resistance.

[End of the Introduction]

Source: Wu, N.M.W., Wong, H.L., & Yam, V.W.W. (2017). Photochromic benzo[*b*]phosphole oxide with excellent thermal irreversibility and fatigue resistance in the thin film solid state via direct attachment of dithienyl units to the weakly aromatic heterocycle. *Chemical Science, 8*, 1309-1315.

Sample 2

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A considerable amount of literature has analysed how the transition to retirement affects subjective well-being (SWB). Older research has reported contradictory results, with no clear findings as to whether retirement had a positive, negative or no general effect on SWB (e.g., Gall et al., 1997; Isaksson & Johansson, 2000; Richardson and Kilty, 1991; Warr et al., 2004). Evidence from more recent studies has highlighted that trajectories of SWB in the post-retirement phase of life show no single universal pattern. Instead, SWB post-retirement depends on a number of protective- and risk-factors that vary across social groups and individuals (e.g., Bender, 2012; Calvo et al., 2009; Pinquart and Schindler, 2007; van Solinge and Henkens, 2005, 2007, 2008; Wang, 2007; Wetzel et al., 2016). Specifically, influencing factors such as economic, social and personal resources (e.g., socio-economic status, marital status, health) as well as the situational context in which retirement takes place (e.g., timing and voluntariness of retirement) can enhance or hamper SWB in the post-work phase of life (van Solinge, 2013).

In the present study, we add to the literature by focusing on how specific *pathways to retirement* may lead to different patterns of SWB post-retirement. Pathways to retirement refer to the succession of different labour market statuses in the years preceding retirement. To date, most research has been focused on people with straightforward work-to-retirement transitions (e.g., Damman, Henkens & Kalmijn, 2013a; Hershey & Henkens, 2014; Shultz et al., 1998) while systematically excluding people who did not participate in the labour market prior to retirement (e.g., unemployed people, homemakers, people who do not work due to health impairments). In recent decades, however, retirement transitions have become more de-standardised (Brückner & Mayer, 2005), and an increasing number of people retire from a position of economic inactivity (Ebbinghaus, 2006; Fasang, 2010; Kohli et al., 1991). The rising prevalence of non-standard pathways emphasizes the need to understand how different pathways may be related to distinct patterns of SWB post-retirement. Furthermore, it is increasingly recognized that the retirement transition and its impact on SWB is a dynamic process which occurs over several years (Wang et al., 2011). The few existing studies which analysed trajectories of SWB before and after retirement

either did not focus on the diversity of retirement pathways (Hetschko et al., 2013; Wetzel et al., 2016) or could not capture the long-term dynamics of SWB due to data limitations (Halleröd et al., 2013; Ponomarenko et al., 2017).

In the current study, we address these gaps in the literature by examining the relationship between five distinct pathways to retirement and patterns of SWB from pre-to post-retirement. Our conceptualization of pathways to retirement considers both the duration and succession of labour market statuses before retirement. As a result, we are better able to differentiate the consequences of (non-)employment histories before retirement on SWB in later life relative to previous studies. We also extend previous research by distinguishing between short-term (i.e., first year of retirement) and long-term (ten years after retirement) trajectories of SWB post-retirement. As an indicator of SWB, we use life satisfaction which reflects the cognitive component of SWB (Diener, 1984). Critical life events like retirement affect life satisfaction more than the affective components of SWB (i.e., emotions) (Luhmann et al., 2012). Life satisfaction is therefore a valid indicator for analysing the patterns of SWB from pre-to post-retirement because it mirrors the subjective evaluation of the current level as well as changes in living conditions (Diener et al., 2013).

In the following, we first introduce the institutional context of retirement in Germany and five distinct pathways to retirement. We then outline our theoretical framework for understanding the development of SWB during the retirement transition which combines assumptions from the life course approach, dynamic resource-based perspective and cumulative (dis)advantage. We argue that short-term development of SWB is more strongly associated with institutionalized norms and changes in social status, while long-term development of SWB is more strongly associated with individuals' access to resources. Finally, we draw on our theoretical framework to make specific hypotheses about how we expect the different retirement pathways will be related to patterns of short- and long-term development of SWB post-retirement.

[End of the Introduction]

Source: Schmälzle, M., Wetzel, M., & Huxhold, O. (2019). Pathways to retirement: Are they related to patterns of short- and long-term subjective well-being? *Social Science Research, 77*, 214-229.

Task 5

Part I

Select a journal article in your discipline that you have read recently. Analyse the introduction section of the article and identify the moves for writing up the Introduction. Pay attention to the language features and the phrases for achieving the moves as well. Share your findings with a partner.

Part II

Ask ChatGPT to analyse the structure and the language features of the introduction section of the article you have just analysed. Compare its analysis results with yours. What specific features about the structure and language do you notice? Do you think these features are common in your discipline?

Extended Task (Homework): Select a thesis in your discipline. You can visit HKBU Institutional Repository https://scholars.hkbu.edu.hk/en/studentTheses/ to look for a thesis in your field. Review the introduction section of the article and identify the moves for writing up the Introduction and analyse the language features.

Task 6

Planning for the Introduction of Your Research

Now think about the introduction of your own research. Use the space below to make notes. After that, present your ideas to a classmate and explain why you have such a plan.

1. What are the key components in the introduction of your own research?

2. What is the organisation pattern of the introduction? What are the moves? Why do you organize the ideas in this way?

Task 7

Introducing Your Research Verbally

Postgraduate students have many opportunities to introduce their research verbally to specialist or non-specialist audiences in different contexts e.g. academic conferences, candidature confirmation seminars, oral defences (viva), departmental seminars, round-table discussions, lab meetings with thesis supervisors and fellow research postgraduate students, 3-minute thesis competitions. Therefore, it is important for you to be able to verbally introduce your research to others in a concise and organised way.

When introducing your research to others, you need to consider the **audience** (Is s/he a specialist or non-specialist in your field? What does s/he want to know about your research?), **purpose** (Is the purpose of the speech to inform/persuade/inspire?), and the **structure** (How many sections are there? How can you help the audience follow the logical flow of ideas more easily?) of your speech.

At the end of this course, you will be required to introduce your research to your fellow classmates in 3 minutes (Oral Presentation Assessment 3). Now, practice introducing your research to a classmate who may or may not be a specialist in your field.

Use the following guiding questions to help you prepare a two-minute speech introducing your research:

1. What is the general field of your research?
2. What is the particular topic within this field that you are interested in?
3. What specific problems or questions are you interested in?
4. Why are these questions/problems important?
5. What is already known about this topic? What is less known?
6. How will you find out more about this topic?
7. What methods of investigation will you use?
8. What are the expected outcomes?
9. What would be the contributions of your research?

Give some feedback to your classmates by commenting on whether the focus of the research is clear to you and whether you think the speech is organised.

You can find some award-winning three-minute thesis presentations on this website: https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/watch-3mt

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Task 8

Doing Things with Nouns (Nominalization)

Nominalization refers to the process of turning a word of another part of speech (usually an adjective or a verb) into a noun. To **nominalize** a word such as an adjective means to convert it into a noun (e.g. changing *popular* into *popularity*). A nominalized word (e.g. *failure*) is also called a nominalization.

Nominalization is an integral feature of written language and has a few advantages for writers. Nominalization:

● enables the writer to write concisely and formally because it allows information to be packed into a noun-phrase, so that the rest of the clause is available for adding new information. (e.g. *His **dedication** to the job is known to all his colleagues*.)

● creates a focus on results or processes rather than highlighting the action itself (e.g. ***The implementation of the policy** improved outcomes.*)

● provides a link between parts of a text. (e.g. *The **evaluation of the data** led to the **identification of key trends**.*)

● enables us to categorize, label and describe phenomena. (e.g. ***urbanization**, **environmental pollution** and **Internet addiction***)

For the above reasons, it is important for advanced learners of English to learn to nominalize or use nominalizations appropriately in academic writing. (However, it is also important not to overuse nominalizations.)

In order to be able to nominalize a word, you need to be able to turn a word into a noun. Can you turn the following adjectives/verbs into nouns?

Adjectives/Verbs	Nouns
available	
familiar	
necessary	
suitable	
wise	
announce	
develop	
resign	
survive	
terminate	
likely	
possible	
probable	
tend	

Rewrite the following sentences by nominalizing the underlined words.

1. The government should make more affordable housing <u>available</u> to low-income families.

2. The campaign is aimed at making the public more <u>aware</u> of the dangers of drug abuse.

3. A fall in unemployment will make consumers <u>confident</u> again.

4. Size of pension depends partly on <u>how long</u> the employee has served the company.

5. The Internet has become more and more <u>popular</u>.

6. If you are heavily <u>reliant</u> on one client when you are building up your business, it is risky.

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Now, refer to a journal article from your discipline and identify three sentences that use nominalization. Analyze the sentence structure and examine how nominalization enhances the conciseness and clarity of the sentences.

Sentence 1:

Sentence 2:

Sentence 3:

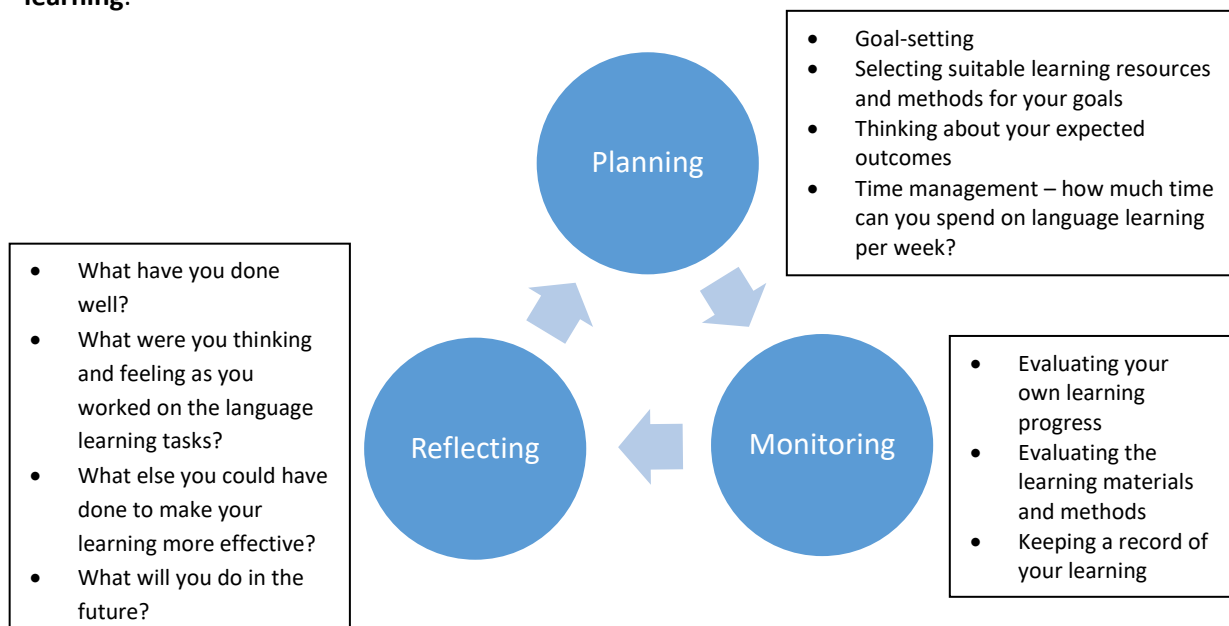
SPEAKING PRACTICE TASK: Preparation for the Next Lesson

Features of a Good Thesis/Journal Article

What do you think are the most important features of a good thesis/journal article? Make notes in the space below. Give a 1-minute speech on this topic. Your teacher may ask you to give the speech in front of the class in Lesson 2.

Independent Language Learning

As a postgraduate student, you need to be able to enhance your academic reading, writing, speaking, listening and research skills independently. To do this systematically, it would be useful if you **i) set language learning goals for yourself** (i.e. identify one or two language areas that you would like to improve), **ii) select relevant learning materials and methods** from the Independent Language Learning Guide (available on Moodle), **iii) carry out the independent language learning activities,** and **iv) regularly monitor and reflect on your own learning progress**. In this course, there will be an individual consultation in which you can discuss your language learning plans and/or the problems you encountered in the independent language learning process with your lecturer. The Language Centre is also providing a range of language learning support services to HKBU students. Please ask your lecturer for more details.

An effective independent language learner should be able to **plan, monitor and reflect on their own learning**:

- Goal-setting
- Selecting suitable learning resources and methods for your goals
- Thinking about your expected outcomes
- Time management – how much time can you spend on language learning per week?

Planning

- What have you done well?
- What were you thinking and feeling as you worked on the language learning tasks?
- What else you could have done to make your learning more effective?
- What will you do in the future?

Reflecting

Monitoring

- Evaluating your own learning progress
- Evaluating the learning materials and methods
- Keeping a record of your learning

Now, start to create a plan to help yourself enhance your English skills during your postgraduate studies. Please refer to Sections 3 and 5 of the Independent Learning Guide in order to complete your goals plan.

GOAL 1

General Skills Area:

<mark>Highlight</mark> which general skills area(s) your goal relates to.

Listening Speaking Reading   Writing Grammar Vocabulary

Specific Goal:

Rationale (In terms of one or more of the following: purpose, language needs, learner style, motivation):

Possible materials (i.e. resources) and methods (i.e. activities, strategies, techniques). Refer to the Independent Language Learning Guide (available on Moodle) for ideas.

Anticipated outcome or progress (What do you expect to achieve by the end of the course?)
Estimated Time Needed (in hours/days):

Online Resources:

1. **Using Online Corpora to Search for Specific Language Examples:**
   - BNCweb: http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/bncwebSignup/user/login.php
   - AntConc: https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/
   - British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus: https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fbawe2
   - Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/

Session One Independent Learning Tasks

Watch the introductory videos on BNC Web Corpus and AntConc. Follow the instructions and create your own corpus.

BNC Web Corpus:

1. Login and Create an Academic Subcorpus in the BNCWeb (~ 6 mins)

   ➡ https://youtu.be/rqs7xK-sU7M

2. Customise User's Settings (~ 4 mins)

   ➡ https://youtu.be/sa8szUGPNvg

AntConc:

1. Create Your Own Corpus with AntFileConverter (~ 6 mins)

- https://youtu.be/SDroeOdUc28

2. Introduction to AntConc + KWIC, Sort, and File Functions (~ 6 mins)

- https://youtu.be/3xxuOZcGzi0