A global view on writing research articles for international journals: principles & practices

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0. Explanations of "global" in JA/RA

0.1 "Big view" (=bird’s eye=top-down=holistic=global)

- macro- → meso- → micro-level
  - chapter/section → paragraph → sentence

writing as process:

- planning – writing/drafting – editing

"Don’t hand in your first draft!"

time 20% 50% 30%

writing as result (e.g. BA/MA thesis of 40+/60+ pages):

- introduction – main body – conclusion

length 20% 60% 20%
**0.2 “Writing”**

**Types of literacy**

- traditional literacy
- multimedia literacy
- academic literacy (skills):
  - information collection
  - information processing

**Information presentation (constructionism):**

- discourse community: genre conventions (expectations) vs.
- writer identity - audience/readership relationship

NOT: “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”, but a craft!!

→ metalanguage
1. Introduction

1.1 Finding a topic

1.1.1 Top-down approach: from theory to practice
- Find a gap in the research literature OR
- **Find a model article** in the research literature

1.1.2 Bottom-up approach: from data to practice
- See an interesting/striking feature in the data
- See a pattern in the data rationale beyond the purely statistical
1.2 Finding a journal

list of discipline-specific journals with impact factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Articles in 2009</th>
<th>Total cites in 2009</th>
<th>Impact factor</th>
<th>Five-year impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Journal of Memory and Language</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5,173</td>
<td>3.221</td>
<td>3.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Computational Linguistics</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>2.212</td>
<td>3.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Language Learning and Technology</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>2.531</td>
<td>3.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Brain and Language</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4,721</td>
<td>2.973</td>
<td>3.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Studies in Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1.323</td>
<td>2.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Language</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,309</td>
<td>1.886</td>
<td>2.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3,591</td>
<td>2.347</td>
<td>2.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Cognitive Linguistics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>2.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Journal of Fluency Disorders</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>2.188</td>
<td>2.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Journal of Communication Disorders</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>1.639</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Language and Cognitive Processes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>2.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Mind and Language</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>2.091</td>
<td>2.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Modern Language Journal</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1.914</td>
<td>2.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Linguistic Inquiry</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>1.450</td>
<td>2.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>1.469</td>
<td>1.991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Finding a research hypothesis

According to Schick and Vaughn, researchers weighing up alternative hypotheses may take into consideration:

- **Testability** (compare falsifiability as discussed above)
- Parsimony (as in the application of "Occam's razor", discouraging the postulation of excessive numbers of entities)
- Scope — the apparent application of the hypothesis to multiple cases of phenomena
- Fruitfulness — the prospect that a hypothesis may explain further phenomena in the future
- Conservatism — the degree of "fit" with existing recognized knowledge-systems.

A working hypothesis is a hypothesis that is provisionally accepted as a basis for further research in the hope that a tenable theory will be produced, even if the hypothesis ultimately fails. Like all hypotheses, a working hypothesis is constructed as a statement of expectations, which can be linked to the exploratory research purpose in empirical investigation. Working hypotheses are often used as a conceptual framework in qualitative research.

The provisional nature of working hypotheses make them useful as an organizing device in applied research. Here they act like a useful guide to address problems that are still in a formative phase.

In inferential statistics, the term "null hypothesis" is a general statement or default position that there is no relationship between two measured phenomena, or no association among groups. Rejecting or disproving the null hypothesis—and thus concluding that there are grounds for believing that there is a relationship between two phenomena (e.g. that a potential treatment has a measurable effect)—is a central task in the modern practice of science; the field of statistics gives precise criteria for rejecting a null hypothesis.
1.4 Finding a research question (RQ)

The research question serves two purposes:

- It determines where and what kind of research the writer will be doing.
- It identifies the specific objectives the study or paper will address.

Examples:

Schmied (1985): Is Tansania in ESL or EIL (EFL) country? (=English as a Second/International/Foreign Language)

Schmied (1992): Is the variation in Relative Constructions greater between varieties (BE vs. IndE) or between different text-types/genres within the varieties?
1.5 Critical Issues: access to infrastructure, etc.

Can I answer this RQ?
Can I do recordings that are good enough for differentiating patterns?
Do I have (access to) an eye-tracker to do reading research seriously?
1.6 Finding a Title + Subtitle

“Sexy Quotation”: Topic + Method

Area: RQ

RQ? Context explanation

Examples:

1a) "Religious bigots and extremists"? or "PDP administration actively sustained the crises, profiteering from it"? Constructing Religion and Politics in Nigerian Terrorism News
1b) "Nigerian Terrorism News: Who blames whom and how?"
1c) "Religion or Politics? Linguistic Devices Used in Nigerian Terrorism News"

2a) "A New Analysis of Bokyı Noun Phrases: Noun Classes, Agreement, and Valency"
2b) "Is Bokyı a Bantu Language? A New Analysis of Bokyı Noun Phrases"
2. Key concepts
2.1 Discourses in science communication

discourse community approach (Hyland 2006, 2012; Schmied 2011) = a writer/speaker appeals to shared knowledge to create a community of discourse incl. linguistic clues: of course, as we know from ...

research discourse

popularisation specialised -> popular discourse

instructional discourse

popular academic novice discourse
2.2 Academic research cycle

Figure 1: The Academic Research Cycle

2.3 The Genre Approach

*research "output"
- research article
- book reviews
- project proposals
- conference presentations

*teacher "talk"/e-learning
- ppt presentations
- lectures
- student presentations
- textbooks
- Wikis/Moodle/Google+
- www pages (HTML, php)

*student "literacy"
- fieldwork notes
- essays (argumentative!)
- MA/BA thesis (persuasive!)
- seminar presentations

"Novice Academic English"

*science "journalism"
- popular science articles
- popular blogs (David Crystal)
- popular science films (Horizon)
- popular science books
- science slam

*discipline-specific
culture-specific

*author-specific
culture-specific
2.3 Prototype approach to genres in academic writing

Related genres:
- science
- journalism
- newsletter
- book

Peripheral genres:
- patent
- user manual
- technical

Core peripheral genres:
- keynote lecture / plenary
- popular blog

Core genres:
- BA
- MA thesis
- PhD
- handbook
- article
- research
- monograph
- term paper (essay)
- project report
- review (article)
- response to review
- seminar
- Wiki/blog
- personal/prof. webpage
- obituary

Instruction-oriented:
- project report
- project proposal
- project report (interim)
- submission letter

Research-oriented:
- conference poster
- conference proposal

Job-oriented:
- job application

JA/RA Paradigms

Concepts

Schmied 2015: 11
2.4 (Academic) metadiscourse, metalanguage

= language about language, i.e. information management/reader guidance beyond the plain proposition fields:

• “global text management”, argumentation structure
  IMRaD -> paragraphing -> cohesion, like conclude
• “local” text management”, text cohesion --> cognitive coherence (first, thus, ...) 
• writer - reader “interaction”, incl. address (you, we)
• writer commitment to the truth value/reliability ... esp. hedging, (epistemic) modal aux/adv. 
  (... may contribute, may be correct ... arguably),
• occasionally boosting (certainly, fact)
3. A global view on editing (meso-level)
from a general global perspective

but written for Dutch users of English, for short argumentative texts!
3.1 An effective title

- provides an indication of the context in which the text should be understood
- orients the reader towards the topic of the text
- strikes a balance between brevity and clarity
- is readily understandable
- does not pre-empt your conclusion (HM 2017: 51)
- makes (further) reading attractive and useful?

combine: sexy title: descriptive title
context title, esp. specific subtitle

examples:
*Working with Media Texts: Deconstructing and Constructing Crises in Europe.*
Complexity and Coherence in English Student Writing, especially in Hypertext Learning Systems.
Where the grass is greener? Colour terms in East African English.
Corpus-based contrastive lexicology: the case of English *with* and its German translation equivalents.
3.2 An introductory paragraph

• provides a context for the argument that is to follow
• expresses your perspective on the issue you will be dealing with
• explicitly or implicitly makes clear which aspects of the issue will not be treated
• has forward dynamics, presenting a coherent development of the topic sentence and involving the reader in your argument
3.3 Intro intro: opening sentence (H/M 2017: 54, 3,4,1,2)

- does not depend on the preceding title for its understanding
- is a fresh start after the title
- is fairly uncontroversial
- is not linked directly to the time of writing

examples:
*For centuries* increasing meat consumption has been an indicator of increasing prosperity... *But today* the new trend towards vegan...
3.4 Climax intro: thesis statement

- expresses the central concern of the text
- is recognisable by its paragraph final **positioning**, without any cumbersome **sign-posting**
- is rather neutral or **suggestive** of the **line** to be followed [??JS]
- is formulated in such a way as to end the paragraph in a **strong, self-confident** way (HM 2017: 59)

elements: good or bad?

*The thesis to be examined in the following paragraphs* is whether grandparents should once again be given a place in the family home.

Any decision to place restrictions on what is broadcast **should follow on** a careful consideration of the pros and cons of television censorship.
4. A global view on information management

4.1 Structure and linking of paragraphs (meso-level)
4.2 Theme and focus in sentences and paragraphs

In Functional linguistics (from Prague School to Halliday), theme (=topic, background, presupposition) and focus (=rheme, new, comment) have been used to describe the argumentation, information management [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topic_and_comment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topic_and_comment) (22/03/18)

the theme may depend on the previous focus of previous theme!
4.3 Cohesive devices (linking, connectors, etc. e.g. clause adverbials , )

coherence = extralinguistic factors contributing to the creation of texture (=implicit)

cohesion = linguistic means which create texture (=explicit)

1. Unfortunately it is not the case that knowledge of the mechanical
2. Unfortunately, an instantaneous comparison was not possible
3. Unfortunately, exact information on gas usage is unavailable
4. Unfortunately, one has no a priori way of predicting
5. Unfortunately, neither easily works.
6. Unfortunately, there are as yet no reliable calculations that
7. Unfortunately, our experience is confined to an equilibrium ...
8. Unfortunately, the energy resolution of a neutrino telescope is ...
9. ... technique to obtain black hole masses which, unfortunately, is unfeasible
10. Unfortunately, lack of information about the collective ...
11. Unfortunately, the complexity of each subprocess also grows ...
12. Unfortunately, these theorems tell us practically nothing about ...
13. Unfortunately, there are very few analytic results available
14. Unfortunately, all recent experiments are, in principle,
15. Unfortunately, all those exciting recent experiments are
16. Unfortunately, those prior art solutions require daunting experiments
17. Unfortunately, the NID is uncomputable since the constituent ...
18. Unfortunately, in many places such information is getting harder ...
19. It’s a good protective barrier,” says Hildebrand, “unfortunately.”
20. Unfortunately, because of the rarity of plant data from this ...
(1) A hasty decision might be the death blow to our hopes. We therefore have to take absolutely everything into account.

(2) The new Ford is going to be a great success. This is clear from the sales figures for the first quarter.

(3) The top selling authors of 2008 were Rankin, Boyd, Elton and Amis. Rankin knocked Boyd off the number one spot. American and Russian nuclear missiles have continued to be active despite the 2007 Geneva agreement. However, from 1 January they will have no pre-set targets for the first time since the Cold War.

(5) Present at the conference were the members of the special commission on product innovation. All of them had experience in dynamic markets.

(6) Allied Corporations plans to merge with Signal to form a company with annual sales of $21 billion. Allied Corporations' sales rose to $14.7 billion in 2008.

(7) Zeolites act like sieves. They only catch molecules small enough to fit into the cavities. And they exclude larger molecules.

(8) Drinking polluted water eventually led to the poison accumulating in people’s bodies. There it destroyed their health.

(9) This sort of comedy is sometimes known as ‘dangerous’ comedy. The main danger is that of not getting a laugh.

(10) To the South and the East, the spread of the accent is much greater. It now covers most of Kent and Essex.
4.4 Reference (micro-): esp. pronouns

(1) According to some people, doing a degree in arts and humanities is the same as committing suicide: they are thought to have no chance of finding any suitable employment.

(2) The Industrial Revolution brought along social abuses and represented a spiritual void. The Victorian Age reacted to this void with a reassessment of British culture: institutions such as the BBC, the publishing company Penguin and several other projects stimulating music, theatre and dance were founded.

(3) Gnosticism was a movement which strove for esoteric knowledge. This knowledge was related to the divine nature of the human soul and was secret. The gnostic path to this esoteric consciousness was a kind of pilgrimage: they travelled in their souls, searching for divinity.

(4) The career prospects of young children are already influenced, positively or negatively, at a very early stage, depending on the child’s parents’ income.

(5) Every country has to deal with the immigration problem in their own way.

(6) Greenpeace is not only concerned with the pollution that is caused by new developments such as genetic engineering but also with the balance in nature. It is of the utmost importance to maintain this balance in nature, because it forms the basis of all life in this world.

(7) The impact of some of the articles and reports by journalists in newspapers or on television is much greater than when it is said by the average citizen.

(8) To call for changes in society cannot be of any immediate help to the individual patient. What they need is the assurance that they can live without having to be afraid of their emotions and without their obsessive addiction to food.
5. Focus on RA/JA paradigm (macro-level)

5.1 IMAC global paradigm spreading from natural sciences into humanities

organisation can be viewed on several levels using different theoretical approaches:

- **global** vs. local planners:
  a fixed structure like IMAC provides a general “skeleton” for global planning, which is said to characterize good writers

- **moves + steps** in sections (Swales’ model)
  e.g. CARS (= Creating A Research Space) to identify a gap to fill

- topical structure analysis:
  discourse deixis through personal pronoun references
  (in the paragraph, the 1st focus is the topic that is referred to by personal pronoun in all following clauses until a new focus topic starts a new paragraph)

- **theme – rheme** (functional sentence perspective)

- IMRaD
### Research paradigm, global text structure:

**I**ntroduction  **M**ethodology  **R**esearch  **A**nd  **D**iscussion

1.2. The trend towards revised IMRAD, adapted for English research (with prototypical phrases):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I = issue, i.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new, i.e. <em>not enough research yet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relevant, i.e. <em>important in discourse or for practical applications</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focussed, i.e. small, but data-based; careful and reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M = methodology, i.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>previous research, i.e. literature review incl. evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hypotheses possible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests/procedure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = analysis, i.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>examples as evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statistical tables as summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significance to generalise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C = conclusion, i.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>summary, e.g. <em>in conclusion, we have shown</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpretation, e.g. <em>this proves that</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contextualisation, e.g. <em>in a wider perspective</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limitations, e.g. <em>more data</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outlook, e.g. <em>further research is necessary</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[https://twiki.tu-chemnitz.de/bin/view/English/IntroResearchPara](https://twiki.tu-chemnitz.de/bin/view/English/IntroResearchPara) (cf. Schmied 2015: 17-20) available in academia.edu
5.2 Examples of RA paradigms: RA with IMRAD structure

1. Introduction and research questions
2. Epistemic modality in academic writing
3. Previous research on epistemic modality in RAs written by non-native authors
4. Corpora and methodology
   4.1 The corpora
   4.2 Procedure of analysis
5. Results and discussion
   5.1 Overall frequency of epistemic modal verbs
   5.2 The commonly used epistemic modal verbs
   5.3 Degrees of epistemic modal strength
   5.4 The phraseological pattern: May + (Very) Well+ Main Verb/V
6. Conclusion and implications

References
JA with a non-IMRAD structure

Second Language Acquisition, world Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

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Abstract
English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is a complex form of language contact, which is viewed from three key perspectives: the cognitive, the micro-social /interactional, and the macro-social. Each contributes crucially to the whole, and each frame has its own dynamics, while feeding into the other levels. Each operates in its particular time scale, resulting in multiple synchronous and asynchronous processes of change. As a contact language, ELF embodies second language use (SLU), which is distinct from Second Language Acquisition (SLA). We can expect ELF to have affinities with world Englishes (WE), and there are indications that ELF is closer to WE than to SLA. English as a Lingua Franca provides unique insights for understanding second languages, on account of its global diffusion and its multiplex contacts with other languages.
Revised ToC of a BA thesis with non-IMRAD structure

metalanguage terms / expected general academic phrases:
2. Theoretical background
   2.1. Definition, key concept
   2.2. Types
   2.3. Theories
3. Case study

“historical perspective” is always an option in humanities and social sciences

should subheadings be more explicit? like
4.1. Polish Migration to the UK before the accession of Poland to the EU in 2004, etc.

should general phrases be supplemented by project-specific one? like
2.3.2. Lee’s Migration Theory: Push and Pull Factors
RA with IMRAD structure

ABSTRACT

1. BACKGROUND
2. LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICIES IN AFRICA
   2.1 LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY IN KENYA
   2.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY
3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
4. METHODOLOGY
   4.2 RESPONDENTS
   4.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND
   4.4 DATA ANALYSIS
5. FINDINGS
   5.1 INTERPRETATION OF THE POLICY
   + Classification of Schools
     - Mother Tongue Provision
     - Determination of Language Predominance
     - Languages of the Catchment
5.2 ATTITUDE TO POLICY
5.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY
6. DISCUSSION
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
REFERENCES
JA/VolumeIntro with non-IMRAD structure

Dlgesting Crises in Europe (DICE): Deconstructing and Constructing Media Texts in Dialogue with Students

- Josef Schmied
- Abstract
- 1. Introduction
  1.1. The Project Background
  1.2. Combining Critical Thinking and Writing
  1.3. Local Context in Macedonia: the Fake News Wiki Website
- 2. Looking at Media from Journalistic and Linguistic Perspectives
  2.1. Journalistic Perspectives
    2.1.1. The Crisis of Journalism
    2.1.2. Definitions of News in the Context of the Expansion and Criticism of Journalistic Work
    2.1.3. Post-Truth Politics and Fake News and Journalistic and Political Reactions
  2.2. Applied Linguistic Perspectives
    2.2.1. Detecting News Bias – Fake News
    2.2.2. From Media Bias to Fake News through Language Analyses
    2.2.3. Combining Critical Discourse and Corpus Linguistics
- 3. Exploring BYU Corpora for “crisis in Europe” and “fake news”
  3.1. Quantitative Analyses of the NOW Corpus
  3.2. Qualitative analyses of texts in the NOW corpus
  3.3. Deconstructing and Constructing Media Texts with Students

4. Conclusion and Outlook

References
5. Conclusion: advice to young academics

5.1 writing, esp. editing your own draft is a craft (= can be learnt by practise) that determines the success of academic careers from global to local: on macro-, meso-, micro-level

5.2 neglected considerations:
   a) planning: psychological “writing block”
      “do not wait for “spontaneous overflow” – make a global plan based on a best practise model
   b) hierarchy: start with “global”, i.e. sections - subsections - paragraphs, finish diligently with details on local level: the right word, idiomaticity (esp. prepositions), grammar (esp. articles), punctuation (e.g. ;)

5.3 use electronic resources as aids:
   spell-, style, grammar checker

5.4 find good models in your area to copy + practice makes perfect …
References


