Academic Writing for Young Academics in Africa: The Journal Article
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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

reading	listening
writing	speaking
translation

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

	Top journals in Linguistics				
	Data provided by Thomson Reuters from its Journal Citation Reports – Social Sciences, 2009				
	Journal	Articles in 2009	Total cites in 2009	Impact factor	Five-year impact
1	Journal of Memory and Language	60	5,173	3.221	3.814
2	Computational Linguistics	17	1,467	2.212	3.722
3	Language Learning and Technology	12	562	2.531	3.575
4	Brain and Language	64	4,721	2.973	3.105
5	Studies in Second Language Acquisition	19	956	1.323	2.881
6	Language	24	2,309	1.886	2.794
7	Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research	111	3,591	2.347	2.714
8	Cognitive Linguistics	29	489	0.814	2.560
9	Journal of Fluency Disorders	17	535	2.188	2.425
10	Journal of Communication Disorders	37	1,157	1.639	2.6
11	Language and Cognitive Processes	55	1,634	2.000	2.233
12	Mind and Language	26	825	2.091	2.173
13	Modern Language Journal	39	1,200	1.914	2.040
14	Linguistic Inquiry	23	1,691	1.450	2.020
15	Applied Linguistics	23	1,086	1.469	1.991

1.3 Finding a research hypothesis

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothesis (04/05/18)

According to Schick and Vaughn,[13] 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[14] in the hope that a tenable theory will be produced, even if the hypothesis ultimately fails.[15] 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.[16][17]

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.[18]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Null_hypothesis (04/05/18)

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.[1] 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?"
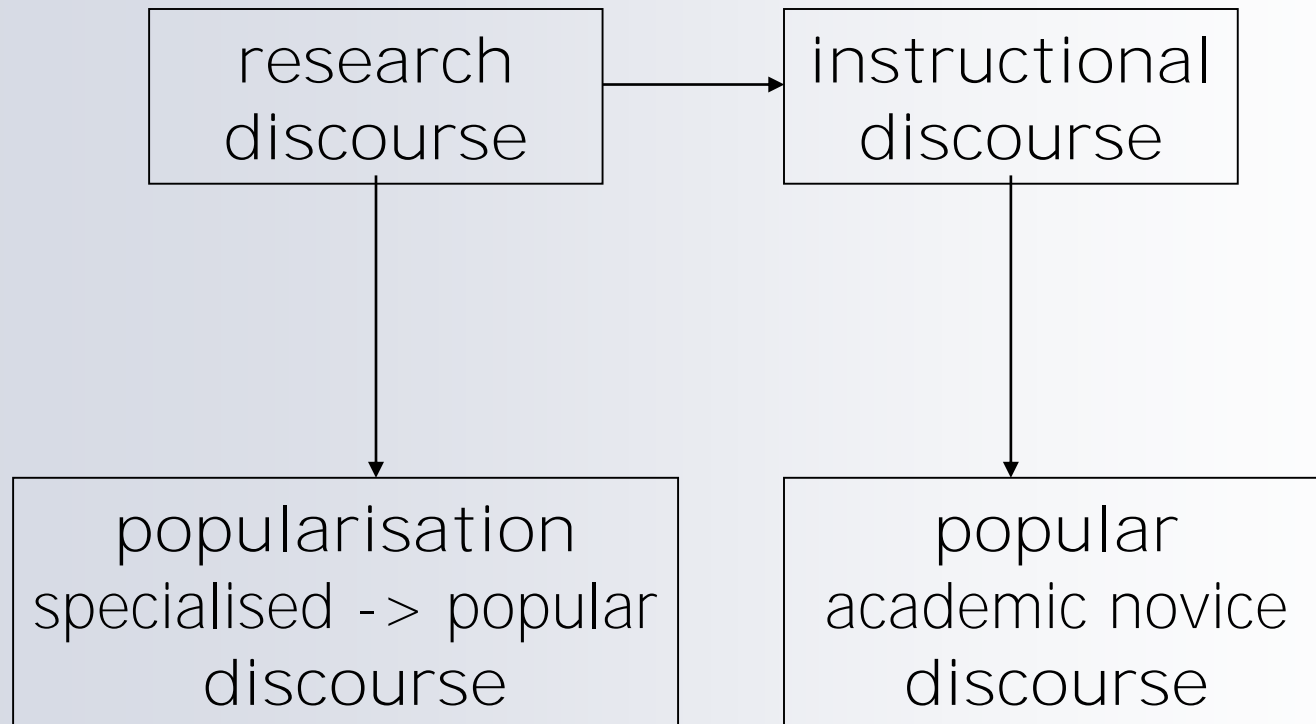1c) "Religion or Politics? Linguistic Devices Used in Nigerian Terrorism News"

2a) "A New Analysis of Bokyi Noun Phrases: Noun Classes, Agreement, and Valency"
2b) "Is Bokyi a Bantu Language? A New Analysis of Bokyi 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     │───────▶│  instructional  │
│    discourse    │        │    discourse    │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
         │                          │
         ▼                          ▼
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│  popularisation │        │     popular     │
│ specialised ->  │        │ academic novice │
│ popular         │        │    discourse    │
│    discourse    │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
```
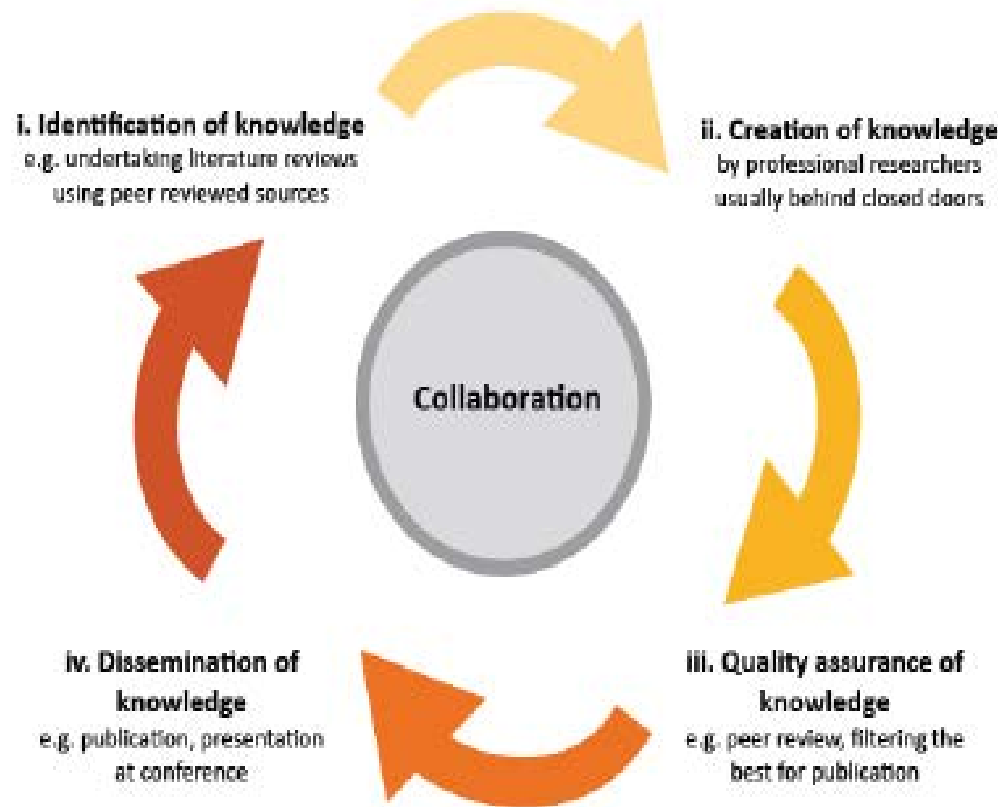
2.2 Academic research cycle

i. Identification of knowledge
e.g. undertaking literature reviews
using peer reviewed sources

ii. Creation of knowledge
by professional researchers
usually behind closed doors

Collaboration

iv. Dissemination of
knowledge
e.g. publication, presentation
at conference

iii. Quality assurance of
knowledge
e.g. peer review, filtering the
best for publication

Figure 1: The Academic Research Cycle

(Image from: Cann, A., Dimitriou, K. & Hooley, T. (2011) Social Media: A Guide for Researchers. London: Research Information Network p.15.)

2.3 The Genre Approach

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

discipline-specific
culture-specific

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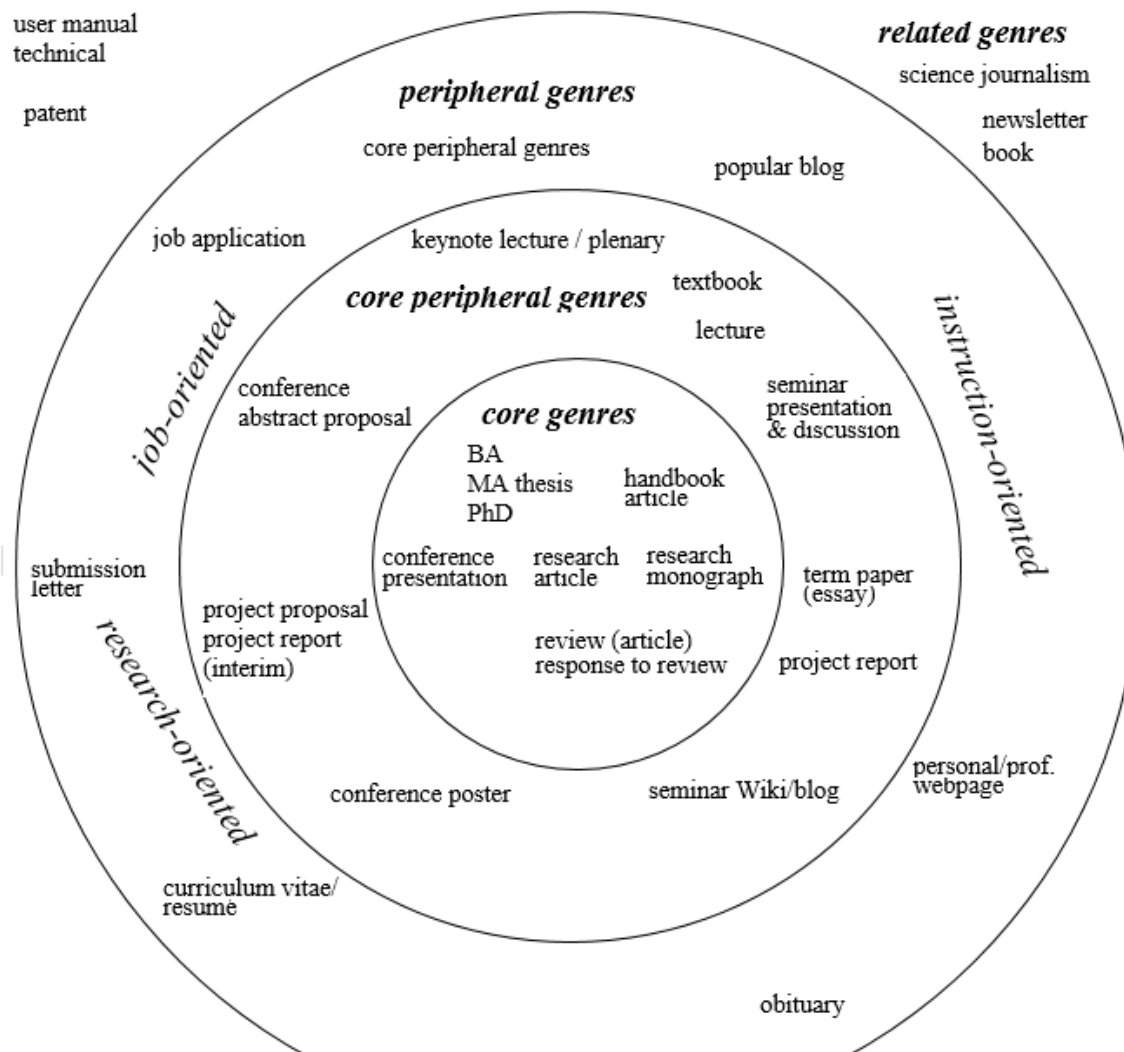- popular science books
- science slam

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"

author-specific
culture-specific

2.3 Prototype approach to genres in academic writing

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

Effective Writing in English

A Sourcebook

3e druk / 2017 / Mike Hannay, J. Lachlan Mackenzie

○ **Boek + website (€ 31,50)** ⑦
ISBN9789046905739, 304 pagina's
Onbeperkt toegang tot website

but written for Dutch users of English, for short argumentative texts!

⊙ Dit boek inkijken   🛍+ Bestellen

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)

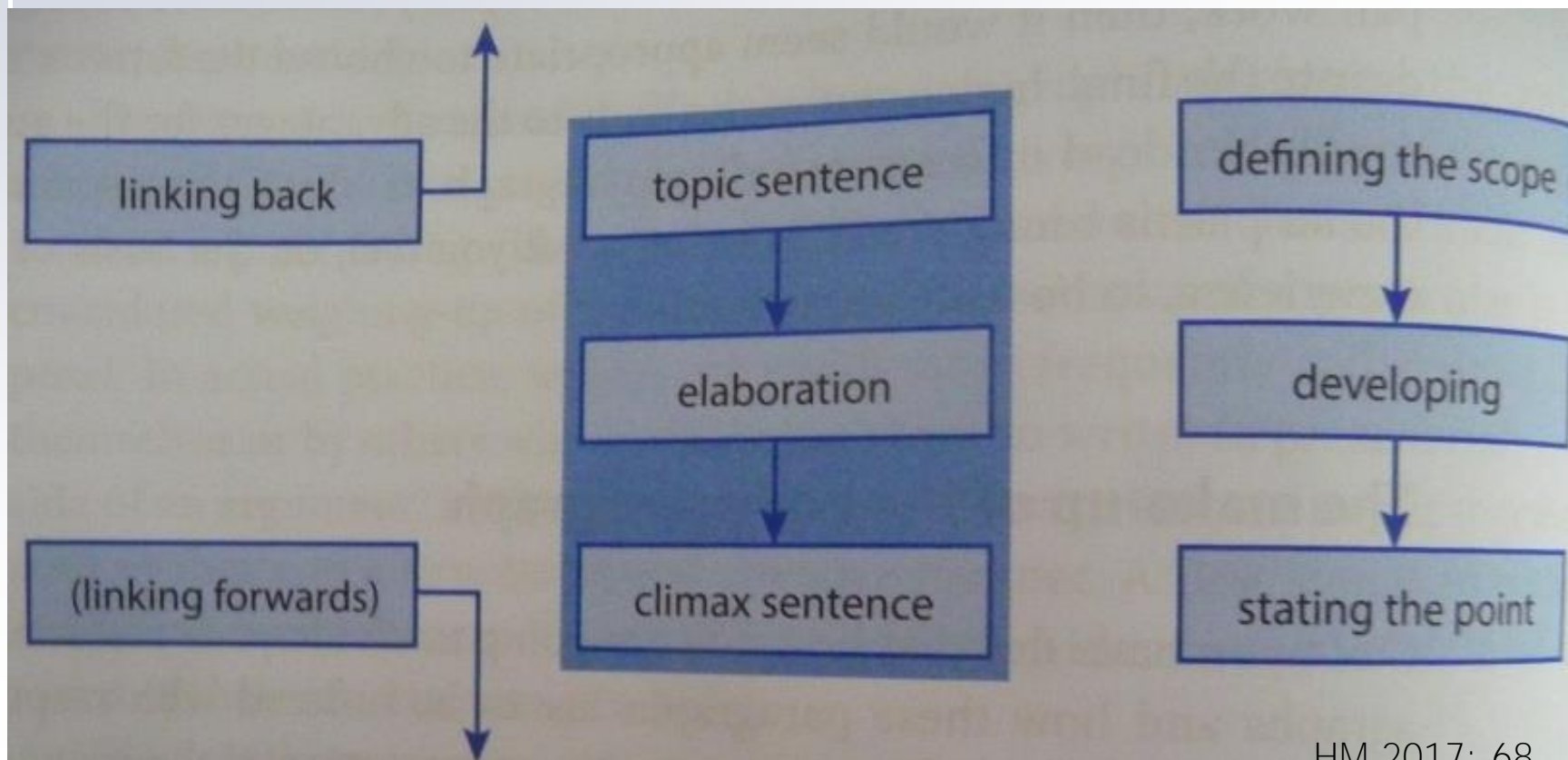examples: good or bad?
The thesis to be examined in the following paragraphs is whether grandparents
    should once again be given a place in the family home.
Any decision to place restrictions on what is broadcast *should follow on* a careful
    consideration of the pros and cons of television censorship.

4. A global view on information management
4.1 Structure and linking of paragraphs (meso-level)

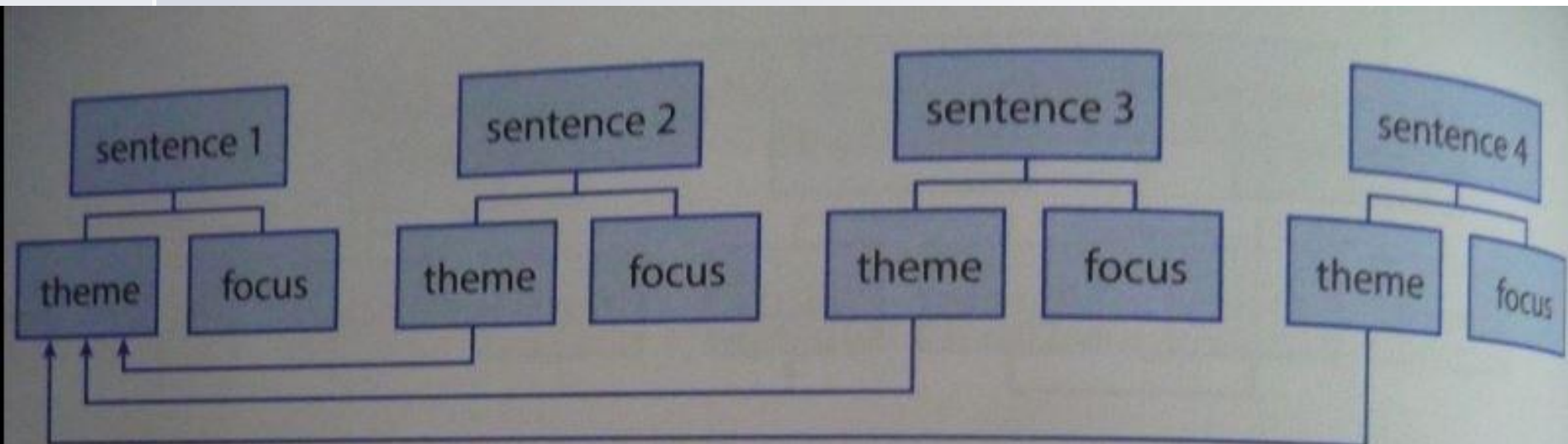| linking back	topic sentence	defining the scope
	elaboration	developing
(linking forwards)	climax sentence	stating the point

HM 2017: 68

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 (22/03/18)

the theme may depend on the previous focus of previous theme!

HM 2017: 114 (113)

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)

#	Text	Code
1	It is **unfortunately** not the case that knowledge of the mechanical	0002AX
2	**Unfortunately**, an instantaneous comparison was not possible	0003AX1
3	**Unfortunately**, exact information on gas usage is unavailable	0003AX1
4	**Unfortunately**, one has no a priori way of predicting	0003AX1
5	**Unfortunately**, neither easily works.	0003AX1
6	**Unfortunately**, there are as yet no reliable calculations that	0004AX1
7	**Unfortunately** our experience is confined to an equilibrium ...	0004AX2
8	**Unfortunately**, the energy resolution of a neutrino telescope is ...	0015AX
9	... technique to obtain black hole masses which, **unfortunately**, is unfeasible	0018AX
10	**Unfortunately**, lack of information about the collective ...	0021AX
11	**Unfortunately**, the complexity of each subprocess also grows ...	0025AX
12	**Unfortunately** these theorems tell us practically nothing about ...	0032AX
13	**Unfortunately** there are very few analytic results available	0040AX
14	**Unfortunately**, all recent experiments are, in principle,	0043AX
15	**Unfortunately**, all those exciting recent experiments are	0043AX
16	**Unfortunately**, those prior art solutions require daunting experiments	0043AX
17	**Unfortunately**, the NID is uncomputable since the constituent ...	0045AX
18	**Unfortunately**, in many places such information is getting harder ...	0056NS
19	it's a good protective barrier," says Hildebrand, "**unfortunately**."	0069NS
20	**Unfortunately**, because of the rarity of plant data from this ...	0100PN

(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.

On-line
exerc.
HM 2017

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:

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

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

- o 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)

- o theme – rheme (functional sentence perspective)

- o IMRaD

Research, paradign, global text structure:
Introduction **M**ethodology **R**esearch **A**nd **D**iscussion

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

I = **issue**, i.e.

> new, i.e. *not enough research yet*
>
> relevant, i.e. *important in discourse or for practical applications*
>
> focussed, i.e. small, but data-based; careful and reliable

M = **methodology**, i.e.

> previous research, i.e. literature review incl. evaluation
>
> hypotheses possible?
>
> data base
>
> tests/procedure

https://twiki.tu-chemnitz.de/bin/view/English/IntroResearchPara

A = **analysis**, i.e.

> examples as evidence
>
> statistical tables as summaries
>
> significance to generalise

(cf. Schmied 2015: 17-20)
available in academia.edu

C = **conclusion**, i.e.

> summary, e.g. *in conclusion, we have shown*
>
> interpretation, e.g. *this proves that*
>
> contextualisation, e.g. *in a wider perspective*
>
> limitations, e.g. *more data*
>
> outlook, e.g. *further research is necessary*

5.2 Examples of RA paradigms: RA with IMRAD structure

RICHMOND SADICK NGULA

EPISTEMIC MODAL VERBS IN RESEARCH ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GHANAIAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF THREE DISCIPLINES

Brno Studies in English

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

DOI: 10.1111/weng.12306

WILEY   WE WORLD ENGLISHES

ARTICLE

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.

1 INTRODUCTION

2 ELF – A SITE OF COMPLEX LANGUAGE CONTACT

2.1   ELF in macro-social perspective

2.2 ELF in micro-social perspective

2.3 ELF in cognitive perspective

3 ELF AS A LANGUAGE OF USERS, NOT LEARNERS

3.1   Repercussions in teaching?

4 CONCLUSION

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

Language-in-Education Policy in Kenya: Intention, Interpretation, Implementation

Peter Nyakundi MOSE
Rhodes University, South Africa

JA/VolumeIntro with non-IMRAD structure

DIgesting 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

Research in English and Applied Linguistics
REAL Studies 12

Research in English & Applied Linguistics

Working with Media Texts:
Deconstructing and Constructing
Crises in Europe
edited by
Josef Schmied &
Isabelle van der Bom

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
…

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