

ACADEMIC WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Introductory Information

Reasons for undertaking a research

- a) to build knowledge
- b) to help in efficient learning
- c) to understand an issue
- d) to solve a problem
- e) to affirm or deny existing knowledge

Topic Selection

Definition

A research topic \implies a subject or topical issue that a writer is interested in sufficiently enough to want to find out more information about it.

It is a brief description of the proposed area of study.

Topic selection(cont'd)

Considerations

Personal Interest

Relevance of the topic

Contribution to knowledge

Originality

Breadth and scope

Competence of the researcher

Sample Topic Selection

- a) **Course area:** Language option
- b) **Language Study area:** Sociolinguistics/Syntax
- c) **Area of Sociolinguistic study:** Language variation
- d) **Area in Language variation:** Variation according to time
Register variation
- e) **Specific topic area:** Grammatical variation in
language use: 1951-2013
- f) **Possible research topic:** The dependent clause in the
editorial language of the
Daily Graphic – 1951 - 2013

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

- the situation whose existence has served as a need for a solution for which the research is needed
- the situation may refer to:
 - i) an area of concern/ interest
 - ii) a condition to be improved upon
 - iii) a difficulty to be eliminated
 - iv) an issue in currency (which needs to be addressed)
 - v) a troubling question in scholarly literature/ theory (which calls for meaningful understanding/ deliberate investigation)

Research Problem

Definition

A definite/clear expression (statement) about

- a) an area of concern
- b) a condition to be improved upon
- c) a difficulty to be eliminated
- d) a gap in existing knowledge that needs to be filled
- e) a troubling question that exists in scholarly literature or theory

In other words, an issue of concern that points to a need for meaningful understanding.

Research Problem (cont'd)

Need for the Research Problem

- a) it provides the context for the research study
- b) it establishes the importance of the topic
- c) it generates the questions which the research aims to answer
- d) it creates reader interest
- e) it is the focal point of any research
- f) it directs the reader's attention to how the research will add to existing knowledge

The Research Problem (cont'd)

Importance of the Research problem

- a) it establishes the importance /need for the research
- b) it creates reader interest
- c) it focuses reader's attention on what 'new' knowledge the study will add to existing literature

Research Problem (cont'd)

Developing the Research Problem

Questions to ask:

- a) what concern is being addressed behind the study
- b) what problem has led to this study
- c) how will addressing this problem help the researcher, society, policy makers, etc.
- d) will the study advance knowledge in the area of study
- e) will the study fill a gap/void in existing literature
- f) will the study extend past research or examine the topic more thoroughly

Statement of the Problem

- This is the expression in the study that informs about the issues and the information about the concerns of the study.
- It is a clear statement , backed with enough contextual information, to establish why the study is important
- It must reflect the issues or the problems whose existence has led to undertaking the study.

NB. In every research, there must be a ‘problem’ to solve. The statement should capture this problem.

AIM

Definition

- the general statement concerning the overall goals/ends of the research project
- it represents the overall intentions of the project
- it's what the research wants to know, i.e. It's about what you hope to achieve
- it signals what/ where you hope to be at the end of the study

NB. The aim is the whole basis for undertaking the research in the first place.

Objectives

Definition

- a concrete statement describing what the research is trying to achieve
- a clear, concise declarative statement which provides direction to the investigation of the variables
- the individual stages that the researcher must achieve on the way to reaching the goals

Objectives (cont'd)

Considerations

- precision
- clarity
- defined boundaries
- achievability (ie. realistic, measurable)

Objectives (cont'd)

Guidelines for Objectives

- a) Specific – to avoid general statements
- b) Measurable – must be doable, realistic in what you aim to study
- c) Achievable – must have definable outcomes, practicable

Research Questions

Definition

a clear, focused, concise question around which you centre your research

the specific question your study aims to answer

it's usually derived from the problem statement

it focuses the study, determines the methodology

it guides the research at every stage

EXAMPLE

Title

Language variation in the editorial language of the *Daily Graphic*: A study in diachrony

Research Problems

In sociolinguistic study, there is the accepted view that

- a) language change occurs over a period of time
- b) the grammatical elements of a language hardly change

Example (cont'd)

Aim

To test these two hypotheses in sociolinguistic study by examining the editorial language of the *Daily Graphic* for the period 1951 - 2013

Objectives

- a) To identify the prevailing dependent clause types over the period
- b) To find out what changes exist in the dependent clause types over the years

Review of Literature (1)

Definition

Literature review is a summary of what existing scholarship says about a topic ie. what other people have written about a subject

It is NOT a bibliographic summary of a study

Rather, it involves a critical reaction to previous studies on the subject

Review of Literature (2)

As regards the study under review, the focus of the review should be

- a) introductory information
- b) objective
- c) results
- d) conclusions

Review of Literature (3)

After a review of all works, select the particular study which is considered directly important for your study:

- a) identify the major ideas in the article
- b) identify the particular area of debate/controversy
- c) state your own views on the study
- d) describe briefly the importance of the work on your study

Research Design

Definition

the framework or strategy utilized in order to carry out a research

Functions

1. It involves the plan by which the research questions will be tackled through the collection, interpretation, analysis and discussion of the data

Functions (cont'd)

1. It defines the study type – e.g.. descriptive, correlational, case study, experimental
2. It defines the method by which data will be collected, analyzed and measured

Examples of research design types

Descriptive - this involves research in case studies, observations, etc.

Correlational – observational study, controlled study, experimental, etc.

Examples of research design types

diagnostic – test of the health of a system meant to identify the stress level of a system

explanatory – used to explain an issue to bring our more understanding of the issue

Data collection methods

- a) interviews
- b) questionnaire
- c) observation
- d) documents
- e) records

Theory

Definition

A formulation meant

- a) to explain, predict and understand phenomena
- b) to extend existing knowledge

Theoretical Framework

Definition

the structure that can support a theory of a research study

Importance of a TF in research

- a) It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists
- b) It consists of concepts of an existing theory that is used for the particular study

Importance of a TF in research

- c). It connects the researcher to existing knowledge
- d). It articulates the theoretical assumptions underlying the research study

The Abstract

Introduction

1. In a research report, the abstract is expected to provide information which serves as a summary of the substance of the research study.
2. It is expected to communicate in brief the content (ie. Main information points) of the study.

Abstract (cont'd)

Accordingly, the abstract should explain:

- what the research is about
- why the research is undertaken
- how the research is carried out
- what the outcome is
- what the results mean
- what the significance of the research is

Abstract (cont'd)

Structure

1. Introduction

This section should

- introduce the overall topic of the research
- give readers background knowledge they need to understand
the report

Abstract (cont'd)

2. Research Focus

This section provides relevant information about

- the research problem
- the research objectives
- the research hypothesis (if any)

Abstract (cont'd)

3. Research Methodology

This section provides relevant information about the method/approach adopted in the study:

- experimental research/case study/survey/library research, etc.
- sampling techniques applied
- the specific data collected

Abstract (cont'd)

4. The Research Theory

This section provides the necessary information about the theory which has been applied in the study.

5. The Research Findings

This section discusses the most important results of the research
It is a concise summary/description of the main results

Abstract (cont'd)

6. The Research Conclusion(s)

This section provides a discussion of the major conclusions that can be derived from the results
the discussion involves the interpretation of the findings in relation to the overall objectives of the study

The Recommendation(s)

This section discusses the implications of the study towards providing a solution to the research problem that brought about need for the study

- NB.** 1) Ideally, the abstract should not run beyond 200 – 300 words.
- 2) The abstract is a stand-alone document, i.e.. A reader should not have to refer to the full report to understand what the research study is all about



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THANK YOU!

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