**Online Courses**

**Teacher’s Name**: *MEGHAGHI SLIMANE*

**Level**: *L 3 (all groups)*

**Module**: **R**esearch **M**ethodology

**SECOND SEMESTER SYLLABUS**

 **1. Data Collection**   1.1. Principles of Data Collection
 1.2. Research Tools
    a) The Questionnaire
   b) The Interview
  c) Observation
   d) Tests

 **2. Data Analysis**  2.1. Quantitative Data Analysis
   2.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

 **3. Writing a Thesis** 4. Quoting
 5. Summarising and Paraphrasing
 6. Writing a Bibliography

**Exercises**
**References:**
-Brown, James Dean. (1988).Understanding Research in Second Language Learning. Cambridge: CUP.

-Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, and Morrison, Keith. (2007).Research Methods in Education. New York: Routledge.

-Johnstone, Barbara. (2000). Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kothari, C.R. (2004). Research Methodology. India: New Age International Publishers.

**Course Number**: *1*

**Course Title**:  **WRITING YOUR THESIS UP**

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Most reports on empirical research follow a standard format. This format typically consists of **five major sections**, which may be subdivided into smaller parts. The five main components of a research report are:

1. **ABSTRACT**

An ***abstract*** is a highly abbreviated (usually 100-200 words) synopsis of your research. It should describe your rationale and objectives, as well as your methods and findings. Because of its limited length, an abstract cannot go into detail on any of these topics. Nor can it report on the limitations of your research or offer suggestions for future research. For those, readers will have to read the entire report. But, after reading your abstract, people unfamiliar with your research should know what it is about and whether they want to read the entire report.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The main purpose of the **INTRODUCTION** is to give a description of the problem that will be addressed. In this section the researcher might discuss the nature of the research, the purpose of the research, the significance of the research problem, and the research question(s) to be addressed. **Three essential parts of a good introduction are:**

* **RATIONALE:**  Somewhere in the introduction you need to inform the reader of the rationale of your research. This is a brief explanation of why your research topic is worthy of study and may make a significant contribution to the body of already existing research.
* **PURPOSE:** The statement of purpose is not simply a statement of why the research is being done. Rather, "purpose" refers to the goal or objective of your research. The purpose statement should answer questions (**a**) "What are the objectives of my research?" and (**b**) "What do I expect to discover or learn from this research?"
* **RESEARCH QUESTION(S):** The introduction usually ends with a research question or questions. This question should be (**a**) related to your research purpose, (**b**) focused, and (**c**) clear.
1. **LITERATURE REVIEW**is a formal survey of professional literature that is pertinent to your particular question. In this way you will find out exactly what others have learned in relation to your question. This process will also help **frame** and **focus** your question and move you closer to the hypothesis or focused question. Once you have decided on a general research question, you need to **read** widely in that area. Use **the same sources** of information that you consulted when you came up with your general question, but now narrow your focus. Look for information that relates to your research question.

In **a review of the literature**, you do not merely summarize the research findings that others have reported. You must also evaluate and comment on each study's worth and validity. You may find that some published research is not valid. If it also runs counter to your hypothesis, you may want to critique it in your review. Don't just ignore it. Tell how your research will be better/overcome the flaws. Doing this can strengthen the rationale for conducting your research.

1. **DESIGN &METHOD** is where you explain to your reader how you went about carrying out your research. You should describe the subjects, the instruments used, the conditions under which the tests were given, how the tests were scored, and how the results were analyzed. Make sure you are honest and forthright in this section. A good rule of thumb is to provide enough detail so that others could replicate all the important points of your research. Failure to provide adequate detail may raise doubts in your readers' minds about your procedures and findings.

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| 1. **INSTRUMENTS & PROCEDURES**
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**INSTRUMENTS** are used to gauge some quality or ability of your subjects. The purpose of the instrument is to elicit the data for your study. In language research, an instrument can be a test, a checklist, a set of categories, etc. The type of instrument and data collection procedure that you use will depend heavily on your choices in the four parameters discussed earlier.

**Here are some possible instruments/procedures:**

* Tests of various skills or behaviours (language proficiency in general, particular language skills, psychological traits, etc.) in various formats (multiple-choice, open response, etc.)
* Interviews (unstructured or structured)
* Questionnaires (mailed or in-person)
* Observations of students or teachers
* Diaries kept by language learners or teachers
* Reviews of school records or documents
* Verbal self-reports by learners (introspective or retrospective)

**ANALYZING DATA:** There are many different ways to analyze data: some are simple and some are complex. Some involve grouping, while others involve detailed statistical analysis. The most important thing you do is to choose a method that is in harmony with the parameters you have set and with the kind of data you have collected. Data and the ways they are measured come in various types. One of the most accepted typologies is **Stevens' Scales of Measurement**. It divides data into four types:

In the **RESULTS** of your report you make sense of what you have found. Here you not only present your findings but also talk about the possible reasons for those findings. Also, if your research approach was deductive, then here is where you accept or reject your hypothesis (based on your findings). In addition, in this section you should use your knowledge of the subject in order to make intelligent comments about your results.

**In the CONCLUSION to your research, you do a number of important things:**

* Summarize the main points you made in your introduction and review of the literature
* Review (very briefly) the research methods and/or design you employed.
* Repeat (in abbreviated form) your findings.
* Discuss the broader implications of those findings.
* Mention the limitations of your research (due to its scope or its weaknesses)
* Offer suggestions for future research related to yours.

**Course Number**: 2

Course Title: HOW TO PREPARE THE ABSTRACT

 The **abstract** is a brief, clear summary of your completed research. A well-prepared abstract enables the reader to identify the basic content quickly and accurately.

 The abstract should provide a brief overview of your entire research. The abstract briefly states the research problem or purpose of the research (**Introduction**), how the problem was studied (**Methods**), what was discovered (**Results**), and how the results might be interpreted (**Discussions and Conclusions**). Acronyms may be used in an abstract; however they should be spelled out the first time they are used. The names of the researcher and the research advisor/mentor should be given in all capital letters. Abstracts should be concise and descriptive i. e. the abstract should:

1.      State the principle objectives, the scope of the investigation or the reason for addressing the topic (the “what” and “why”). This would include your thesis statement.

2.      Describe very briefly the methodology employed or the approach to the problem or topic (the “how” or “where”).

3.      Summarize the results that were found. If some studies had similar findings, then you don’t need to elaborate on each study.

4.      State the principal conclusions. What do the results of your studies suggest?

**These are the basic components of an abstract in any discipline:**

**1) Motivation/problem statement:** Why do we care about the problem? What practical, scientific, theoretical or artistic gap is your research filling?

**2) Methods/procedure/approach:** What did you actually do to get your results? (e.g. analyzed 3 novels, completed a series of 5 oil paintings, interviewed 17 students)

**3) Results/findings/product:** As a result of completing the above procedure, what did you learn/invent/create?

**4) Conclusion/implications:** What are the larger implications of your findings, especially for the problem/gap identified in step 1?

  The abstract should **not exceed 200 words** and should be fully self-contained; that is, it must make sense to someone not familiar with the topic. It should be typed as a single paragraph and must contain complete sentences with correct grammar and spelling. The abstract should not give information or conclusions that are not in the paper or presentation. **It should contain no bibliographic information, figures or references.**

 **Tips:** Revise your rough draft over and over again to

* + correct weaknesses in organization.
	+ omit unnecessary information.
	+ add important information you left out.
	+ eliminate [*wordiness.*](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/wordiness.html)
	+ [*fix errors*](http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/editing.html)in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

**LINK:** <http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html>

**Course Number**: 3

Course Title: The Research Questions

* “**A research question** poses a relationship between two or more variables but phrases the relationship as a question”, (Kerlinger, 1979; Krathwohl, 1988).

Finding a **RESEARCH QUESTION** is probably the most important task in the research process because the question becomes the driving force behind the research-from beginning to end.

 A research question is always stated in question form. It may start out being rather general and become focused and refined later on (after you become more familiar with the topic, learn what others have discovered; define your terms more carefully, etc.)

The research question you start out will form the basis for your review of related research literature. This general question also evolves into your hypothesis (or focused research question). When you draw conclusions, they should address this question. In the end, the success of your research depends on how well you answer this question.

**It is important to choose a question that satisfies certain criteria:**

* It must not be too broad or general (although you will focus it even more later on in the process).
* It shouldn't have already been answered by previous research (although replication with variation is certainly acceptable).
* It ought to be a question that needs to be answered (useful answer).
* It must be a question that can be answered through empirical means.

It is wise to focus your research so that it is "do-able." Be careful! Don't try to do too much in one study. It is, however, very possible (and quite common) to address several related research questions in one study. This approach is "economical" in that it produces more results with about the same amount of effort.

**Here are examples of a research question:**

* If you are studying the effects of sleep on reflexes, you might formulate the following research questions:

 *What are the effects of sleep on reflexes?*

 *Does sleep have an effect on reflexes?*

 *Is maximum reflex efficiency achieved after eight hours of sleep?*

* If you are studying when students learn a foreign language better, you might formulate the following research question:

 *Will students learn a foreign language better when they are in a relaxed state of mind?*

* If you are studying the relationship between learners' ages and their accents , you might formulate the following research question:

 *What is the relationship between learners' ages and their accents?*

**Course Number**: 4

Course Title: The Research Hypotheses

“**A *hypothesis*** represents a declarative statement of the relations between two or more variables”, (Kerlinger, 1979; Krathwohl, 1988).

A hypothesis is a statement that can be proved or disapproved. A research question can be made into a hypothesis by changing it into a statement. For example, the first research question can be made into the following hypothesis:

*Maximum reflex efficiency is achieved after eight hours of sleep****.***

A **HYPOTHESIS** is necessary. It is a focused statement which predicts an answer to your research question. It is based on the findings of previous research (gained from your review of the literature) and perhaps your previous experience with the subject. The ultimate objective of deductive research is to decide whether to accept or reject the hypothesis as stated. When formulating research methods (subjects, data collection instruments, etc.), wise researchers are guided by their hypothesis. In this way, the hypothesis gives direction and focus to the research.

**A null hypothesis** is a hypothesis to be disapproved. The hypothesis above can be turned into a working null hypothesis simply by adding “not”.

 *Maximum reflex efficiency is* ***not*** *achieved after eight hours of sleep****.***

 *Sleep does* ***not*** *have an effect on reflexes.*

Sometimes researchers choose to state their hypothesis in "null" form. This may seem to run counter to what the researchers really expect, but it is a cautious way to operate. When this null hypothesis is disproved or falsified, the researcher may then accept a logically "alternate" hypothesis. This is similar to the procedure used in courts of law. If a person accused of a crime is not shown to be guilty, then it is concluded that he/she is innocent.

**Course Number**: 5

Course Title: PRINCIPLES OF DATA COLLECTION

 **Data collection** is the process of **gathering** and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Data collection is an important process in research. There are two types of data to Kothari, C,R, (2004):

**The primary data** are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. They are collected by a researcher from first-hand sources, using methods like surveys, interviews, or experiments. It is collected with the **research** project in mind, directly from primary sources.

**The secondary data** are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process. They refer to **data** that is collected by someone other than the user. Common sources of **secondary data** for social science include information collected by government departments, organizational records and **data** that was originally collected for other research purposes.

**Data** can be collected through **various instruments**. The collection of **primary data** relies on the use of **observation**, **questionnaires** and **interviews**.  The collection of **secondary data** involves the use of **Published** and **unpublished materials**.

The collected data are classified into two types **quantitative** and **qualitative**. Quantitative data are numerical. Qualitative data refer to descriptive information. The process of data collection relies on the following **principles**:

- keep things as simple as possible and suitable to the studied object;

- plan the entire process of **data** selection, **collection**, analysis and use from the start;

- ensure that any **data collected** is valid, reliable and credible.

- It is also important that ethical issues are considered.

**Course Number**: 6

Course Title: RESEARCH TOOLS

* 1. **The QUESTIONNAIRE**

The use of a questionnaire allows you to interact with the respondents and explain what is expected from them. It is a fairly skilled task to design a questionnaire relevant to your research question(s), and yet appropriate for the people to whom it will be administered, i.e. , what form your questionnaire takes and how you administer it will depend upon your research question(s) and the people you want information from.

**General points about the use of questionnaires**

**Devising questions**

* As a first step you should list the information you require: sort this under broad headings, then identify specific items.
* When you start formulating questions you must take care over choice of language: don’t make this too complex, or too simple for your respondents. You should avoid obscure terminology, acronyms and abbreviations. Don’t use vague or over-general terms that are likely to be interpreted differently by different people. Sometimes it is useful to break down the idea you are trying to get at into items that typify what you mean. For example, if you were interested in how democratic decision-making processes were in a school, you might identify several specific questions that you felt would provide evidence of this.
* Your questions should be clear, concise and unambiguous. You should try not to use multiple questions, and should avoid double negatives.
* You should consider grouping questions about similar issues together.
* Sometimes you may want to use a four or five-point scale as a way of getting answers to your questions. For example, you can ask your respondents whether a particular event happens ‘never, occasionally, frequently, always (please ring the term that most nearly applies)’.
* Are you using ‘closed’ or ‘open-ended’ questions? When it comes to written questionnaires issued to a large number of respondents use the latter sparingly – they take a lot of time to process.

 **The design of the questionnaire**

* Use only one side of the paper.
* Give the questionnaire a heading showing what it is about.
* If the questionnaire is not to be administered personally, you should provide a covering letter or a paragraph of introduction at the beginning.
* Keep the questionnaire as short as possible. Space out the items.
* Give clear instructions in capital letters, e.g. ‘TICK’ and ‘WRITE IN’.
* Where the information you are requesting is of a sensitive nature you should give people the choice to opt out.
* Order the questions so that the straightforward non-controversial questions come first and the more sensitive ones last.
* Try to order the questions so that they come in a logical sequence.
* You may need a ‘Don’t know’ or ‘Not applicable’ category.
* It may be useful to have an ‘Other’ category with a ‘PLEASE SPECIFY’.
* It is a nice gesture to finish the questionnaire with ‘THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP’.
* Always review your questionnaire periodically in the light of the information gathered and any feedback respondents provide about difficulties in completing it.

Questionnaires are never perfect. Ideally they should be custom-built for a specific purpose. Beware of 'off-the-shelf versions – as pointed out above, these will require adaptation, a pilot and (usually) revision.

**OPEN-ENDED VERSUS CLOSED QUESTIONS**

There is a distinction between asking open-ended questions, which provides qualitative information, and asking closed questions, which may provide information you can quantify. The main features of each approach are set out below.

1. **Open-ended questions**
	* Allow your informants some degree of flexibility in their responses – they can select what seems relevant.
2. **Closed questions**
* Limit the response(s) your informant can give.
* The choice of responses you allow may not cover your informants' preferred response(s).

**Advantages of a questionnaire**

* It is less expensive.
* It offers greater anonymity.

**Disadvantages of a questionnaire**

* Application is limited.
* Response rate is low.
* There is a self-selecting bias.
* Opportunity to clarify issues is lacking.
* Spontaneous responses are not allowed for.
* The response to a question may be influenced by the response to other questions.
* It is possible to consult others.
* A response cannot be supplemented with other information.

 **b) The Interview**

 **Interviewing** is a commonly used method of collecting information from people. According to Burns (1997: 329), **‘an interview is a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person’**. In other words, any person-to-person interaction, either face to face or otherwise, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind is called **an interview**.

 When **interviewing a respondent**, you, as a researcher, have the freedom to decide the format and content of questions to be asked of your respondents, select the wording of your questions, decide the way you want to ask them and choose the order in which they are to be asked. This process of asking questions can be either very **flexible**, where you as the interviewer have the freedom to think about and formulate questions as they come to your mind around the issue being investigated, or **inflexible**, where you have to keep strictly to the questions decided beforehand – including their wording, sequence and the manner in which they are asked.

**Types of Interview**

1. **Unstructured Interviews**

 The strength of **unstructured interviews** is the almost complete freedom they provide in terms of content and structure. You are free to order these in whatever sequence you wish. You also have complete freedom in terms of the wording you use and the way you explain questions to your respondents. You may formulate questions and raise issues on the spur of the moment, depending upon what occurs to you in the context of the discussion.

 **Unstructured interviews** are prevalent in both **quantitative** and **qualitative** research. The difference is in how information obtained through them in response to your questions is likely to be used. In **quantitative research** you develop response categorizations from responses which are then coded and quantified. In **qualitative research** the responses are used as descriptors, often in verbatim form, and can be integrated with your arguments, flow of writing and sequence of logic. As unstructured interviews are dominantly used in qualitative research, they are described in greater detail under ‘Methods of data collection in qualitative research’.

* 1. T**ypes** **of** U**nstructured Interview**

 **1.1.1 In-depth Interviews** are ‘repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words’.

 **1.1. 2** F**ocus Group Interviews** deals with the exploration ofthe perceptions, experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common with regard to a situation or event.

 **1.1.3** **The narrative technique** has almost no predetermined contents except that the researcher seeks to hear a person’s retelling of an incident or happening in his/her life. Occasionally, you encourage the individual by using active listening techniques; that is, you say words such as ‘uh huh’, ‘mmm’, ‘yeah’, ‘right’ and nod as appropriate.

 **1.1.4 Oral histories** involve the use of both passive and active listening. Oral histories, however, are more commonly used for learning about a historical event or episode that took place in the past or for gaining information about a cultural, custom or story that has been passed from generation to generation.

1. **Structured interviews**

In **a structured interview** the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. An interview schedule is a written list of questions, open ended or closed, prepared for use by an interviewer in a person-to-person interaction (this may be face to face, by telephone or by other electronic media). One of the main advantages of the structured interview is that it provides uniform information, which assures the comparability of data. Structured interviewing requires fewer interviewing skills than does unstructured interviewing.

**Advantages of the Interview**

* The interview is more appropriate for complex situations.
* It is useful for collecting in-depth information
* Information can be supplemented.
* Questions can be explained
* Interviewing has a wider application.

**Disadvantages of the Interview**

* Interviewing is time consuming and expensive.
* The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interaction
* The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interviewer.
* The quality of data may vary when many interviewers are used.
* The researcher may introduce his/her bias.

**c) Observation**

 **Observation** is a way of collecting data through observing (monitoring or viewing the subject). **Observation data collection method** is classified as a participatory study, because the researcher has to immerse him / her in the setting where his / her respondents are, while taking notes and/or recording.

 “**Observation is a data collection method which often offers the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live data’ from the ‘situations’. It enables the researcher to understand the content, to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might otherwise be consciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data, and to access personal knowledge**” (Cohen et al., 2005). For Denscombe (2010), “**observation does not rely on what people say they do, or what they say they think. It is more straightforward than this. It is based on the premise that, for certain purposes, it is best to observe what actually happens**”.

 Observation can be **structured** or **unstructured**.

* In **structured** (systematic) observation, data collection is conducted using specific variables and according to a pre-defined schedule.
* **Unstructured** observation is conducted in an open and free manner in a sense that there would be no pre-determined variables or objectives.

**Advantages of observation** data collection method include direct access to research phenomena, high levels of flexibility in terms of application and generating a permanent record of phenomena to be referred to later.

At the same time, observation method is **disadvantaged** with longer time requirements, high levels of observer bias, and impact of observer on primary data, in a way that presence of observer may influence the behavior of sample group elements.

**d) Tests**

 A test is a tool of evaluation. It is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as “**an examination of somebody’s knowledge or ability, consisting of questions…to answer or activities…to perform.”** Moreover, a test can be used as a research instrument. “**In tests, researchers have at their disposal a powerful method of data collection, an impressive array of tests for gathering data of a numerical rather than verbal kind**” (Cohen et al., 2007: 414).

**General guidelines:** when constructing a test, the researcher should take into consideration the following elements:

* The purposes of the test
* The content of the test
* The format of the test
* The validity and reliability of the test
* The timing of the test.
* The scoring of the test.

**Advantages:**

* Tests provide information about learners’ knowledge.
* The results of tests help the researcher to make a comparison between different groups of learners.
* Tests are more reliable.

**Disadvantages:**

* Tests may be expensive.
* They may not be flexible.
* Tests can be subjective.

**Course Number**: 7

Course Title: DATA ANALYSIS

 **2. Data Analysis**

 **2.1. Quantitative Data Analysis**

**What is quantitative data?** Quantitative data are data that can be expressed as **numbers** or can be **quantified**. In other words, quantitative data can be measured by **numerical variables**. They are easily amenable to statistical manipulation and can be represented with a wide variety of statistical [types of graphs](http://intellspot.com/types-graphs-charts/) and charts such as line, graph, bar graph, [scatter plot](http://intellspot.com/scatter-plot/), [box and whisker plot](http://intellspot.com/box-and-whisker-plot-examples/).

**Key characteristics of quantitative data**

* It can be quantified and verified.
* Data can be counted.
* Data type: number and statistics.
* The answer questions such as “**how many**, “**how much**” and “**how often**”.

**Types of quantitative data:** There are 2 general types of quantitative data:

* **Discrete data** – a count that involves integers. Only a limited number of values are possible. The discrete values cannot be subdivided into parts. For example, the number of children in a school is discrete data. You can count whole individuals. You can’t count 1.5 kids.
* **Continuous data** – information that could be meaningfully divided into finer levels. It can be measured on a scale or continuum and can have almost any numeric value. For example, you can measure your height at very precise scales — meters, centimeters, millimeters.

**Quantitative data analysis** ends with easy understandable and quantifiable results. But before starting the analysis you have to define **the level of measurement** involved in the quantitative data.

**There are 4 scales / levels of measurement: (a) Nominal –**data scales used simply for labeling variables, without quantitative value. The nominal data just name a thing without applying it to an order. Even though we can use the numbers, they do not denote quantity. Examples of nominal data: hair color (Blonde, Brown, Brunette, etc.). **(b) Ordinal**. Ordinal data is placed into some kind of order by their position on the scale. They often indicate superiority. Example of ordinal data: the first, second and third person in a competition. **(c) Interval –** numerical scales that show information about an order. In interval scales, the intervals between each data value are the same. **(d) Ratio –**not only show order and have equal intervals, but they can also have a value of zero.

**The scales of measurement** are very important because they determine types of data analysis that can be performed.

 **2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

**What is qualitative data?**  Qualitative data (categorical data) are information that can’t be expressed as a number and can’t be measured; they can be sorted by category. They consist of words, pictures, observations, and symbols, analyzed to look for common themes. **Qualitative Data Analysis** (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the **qualitative data** that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. QDA is usually based on an interpretative philosophy.

**Key characteristics of qualitative data**

* It cannot be quantified and verified.
* Data cannot be counted.
* Data type: words, objects, pictures, observations, and symbols.
* It answers questions such as “**how this has happened**” and “**why this has happened**”.

## Summary of Qualitative Analysis Vs. Quantitative Analysis

* Quantitative analysis quantifies data to test hypotheses or predict the future whereas qualitative analysis seeks to get a deeper understanding of why certain things occur.
* The sample is small in qualitative analysis and cannot be used to represent the whole population while in quantitative analysis the sample is large and can represent the entire population.
* The researcher conducts interviews or surveys to collect qualitative data whereas in quantitative analysis the research conducts experiments, observations and measurements.
* Typical data include color, race, gender, in qualitative analysis whereas in quantitative analysis include all measurable quantities such as density, length, size, weight.
* Qualitative analysis is exploratory and subjective whereas Quantitative analysis is conclusive and objective.

**Course Number**: 8

**Course Title:** **Guidelines for Writing a Thesis**

1. **Guidelines for Writing a Thesis**

**3.1 INTRODUCTION**

 The purpose of a thesis is to demonstrate your proficiency in academic research and appropriate academic communication. A thesis demonstrates your mastery of a particular subject area and your ability to independently create new scientific knowledge. When writing your thesis, your information retrieval skills are developed and your facility for critical and analytical thinking, problem solving and all of which are skills required for success in your−argumentation is strengthened future working life.

 **3.2 THE PROCESS OF WRITING A THESIS**

 The process starts with (a) **the choice of the research topic**. You are expected to propose a topic yourself, after which you discuss the topic in general terms together with your supervisor. The research topic for the thesis can be found in any subject area of the field. There are several **ASPECTS** worth noting in the choice of the research topic:

* your personal interest in the topic,
* your own resources (knowledge, skills and time available),
* the availability of source material,
* the availability of data,
* the scientific importance of the topic,
* the general social interest of the topic,
* the importance of the topic for your future professional career.

After the topic has been chosen and the supervisor has accepted it, the next step is (b) **gaining familiarity with the available scientific literature on the topic**. Reading earlier research serves several **PURPOSES**:

1. **Outlining the general picture**
* What is the state-of-the-art knowledge in the chosen research area?
* Is there much− or little earlier research?
* Is it recent or older? Who are the leading scholars?
* From which viewpoints has the topic been investigated before?
* What kinds of− methods and data have been used in earlier research?
* What are the most important findings?
* How does your thesis relate to other publications in the field?
1. **Strengthening the substance knowledge**

* It helps you to focus on the essential literature regarding your own thesis.
* It helps you to choose the studies upon which you will develop the theoretical
* framework of the thesis and design its empirical research setting.
1. **The development of expertise**
* It helps you to evaluate the existing literature critically, identify potential gaps, and shortcomings in it.
* It helps you to make your viewpoint precise and to define the actual research problem or research task.

The next step in the process is (c) **writing a preliminary research plan** which includes the following:

* a preliminary title of the thesis
* a preliminary table of contents of the thesis
* an introduction of the topic
* an assessment of the significance of the topic and the motivation for the research
* a description of the aim of the thesis and the research problem or task
* an outline of preliminary research question(s)
* a brief description of the research method(s) and data
* a brief review of existing research and/or a preliminary list of references

 **3.3 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

 The general structure of a thesis is always the same, regardless of the research topic or the research orientation. A thesis includes the following ingredients in the given order: ***THE COVER PAGE*** (***TITLE*** of the thesis should be informative, to the point, and in harmony with the contents of the thesis), ***ABSTRACT*** (it presents its reader with a good general idea of the contents and the most important conclusions of the thesis, ***TABLE OF CONTENTS*** (it presents the structure of the thesis, that is, **the headings** and **the subheadings** along with their **page numbers**. **The indentation** illustrates the hierarchy of **chapters** and **subchapters**. There must be at least two subchapters at each chapter level (e.g. 2.1 and 2.2). Chapter levels should not exceed three (e.g. main chapter 2 and subchapters 2.1− and 2.1.1). Chapter titles REFERENCES and APPENDICES are not numbered, Figures and tables have their own tables of contents), **INTRODUCTION**, **BODY**, **GENERAL CONCLUSION**, **list of REFERENCES** and possible **APPENDICES**.

The next step in the process is writing your (d) **Introduction**

* description, background and significance of the research topic
* purpose of and motivation for the study
* research problem or task and research question(s)
* relationship with and value added to previous research
* description of research method(s) and data (on a general level)
* the most important results and conclusions (especially in quantitative research)

The next step in the process is (e) **theoretical framework.**  This section can contain several **chapters** and its structure and contents are determined by the chosen topic and research orientation. The following issues are addressed:

* definition of key terms and concepts
* description of the central theoretical frameworks and research approaches related to the chosen topic
* definition of the theoretical or conceptual framework of the thesis
* review of previous empirical studies (different viewpoints, methodological approaches, most important results, differences of opinion, contradictions and shortcomings)
* positioning of the thesis in relation to the research field
* definition of the research strategy (in qualitative research) or the hypotheses to be tested (in quantitative research).

The next step in the process is (f) **Data and research method(s).** Itincludes the description and justification of the data being used (contents, quality, quantity, collection method, adjustments made) and the chosen research method(s).

The next step in the process is (g) **Data analysis**. Itcontains a detailed description of your own research, the results you have obtained and their interpretation. The results are not only reported but they are also reflected towards the previously− presented theoretical framework and earlier empirical results.

The next step in the process is (h) **General Conclusion.** It starts with a repetition of the purpose of the thesis and its stated research problem, after which answers will be given to the following kinds of questions:

* What are the main results of the study and what new information has been obtained?
* To what extent do the results support or differ from earlier research results?
* To what extent can the results be generalized?
* How reliable are the results and what restrictions are there connected with the research?
* How can the results be made use of?
* What kinds of topics and questions arise for further study as a result of your study?

**N.B:** The **General Conclusion** is thus very similar to the analysis section, but now no− numerical results are to be presented, the ideas are expressed in written text only, just using fewer words.

The next step is (i) **REFERENCES.** The list of references contains all the sources cited in the text. In your thesis, each piece of text that is not based on your own reasoning must be accompanied by an appropriate reference to the original source(s). If, however, your text is based on some source, even if it is general knowledge, the source must be indicated. A person who uses someone else’s text without giving credit to the original author is guilty of academic theft called **plagiarism**, which is considered a serious academic offence.

The next step is (j) **APPENDICES.** They contain all such clarifying information that does not serve any− purpose if presented in the actual text. Typical appendices are questionnaires used in the research, outlines for semi structured interviews, and detailed data descriptions. The appendices are the place for material that takes up too much space in the body of the thesis In the text, there must be a reference to all appendices.− The appendices are numbered consecutively.− In the table of contents, the appendices are given a title describing their contents.

**Course Number**: 9

**Course Title:** **QUOTING**

1. **Quoting**

 According to Pyrczak and Bruce (1992: 51), **a direct quotation** is justifiable ”when the writer of the review (1) wants to illustrate either the original author’s skill at writing or lack there (2) believes that the wording of a statement will have an emotional impact on the reader that would be lost in paraphrase.” Direct quotations must be used sparingly and they should be as short as possible. A direct quotation is placed in quotation marks **“...”** and its wording is exactly the same as that of the original. The **reference** is written outside the quotation marks and the page number is always included. If the reference is at the end of the quotation, the place of the period follows the rules. In qualitative research, direct quotations are often used when referring to interviews. The quotation can be separated from the actual text by using the carriage return, indenting by 1 cm and using spacing 1: **“… Then we realized that if we want to remain in the net business, we had better start using classified ads.”** (The managing director) The use of indentation and tighter line spacing is also justified in case the direct quotation is rather long.

**Summary:** **quotations** are exact representations of a source, which can either be a written one or spoken words. Quotes imbue writing with an authoritative tone and can provide reliable and strong evidence. However, quoting should be employed sparingly to support and not replace one’s writing.

* Ensure that direct quotes are provided within quotation marks and properly cited.
* A Long quote of three or more lines can be set-off as a block quote.
* Short quotes usually flow better when integrated within a sentence.

**Course Number**: 10

**Course Title:** **SUMMARIZING AND PARAPHRASING**

**5. Summarizing and Paraphrasing**

 **5.1 Summarizing**

**To summarize** is to condense a text to its main points and to do so in your own words. To include every detail is neither necessary nor desirable. Instead, you should extract only those elements that you think are most important—**the main idea** (thesis) and its **essential supporting points**, which in the original passage may have been interwoven with less important material. In other words, the summary is a distillation of the ideas or argument of the text. It is a reconstruction of the major point or points of development of a text, beginning with the thesis or main idea, followed by the points or details that support or elaborate on that idea.

### QUALITIES OF A GOOD SUMMARY

* **A summary must be comprehensive:** You should isolate all the important points in the original passage and note them down in a list. Review all the ideas on your list, and include in your summary all the ones that are indispensable to the author's development of her/his thesis or main idea.
* **A summary must be concise:** Eliminate repetitions in your list, even if the author restates the same points. Your summary should be considerably shorter than the source. You are hoping to create an overview; therefore, you need not include every repetition of a point or every supporting detail.
* **A summary must be coherent:** It should make sense as a piece of writing in its own right; it should not merely be taken directly from your list of notes or sound like a disjointed collection of points.
* **A summary must be independent:** You are not being asked to imitate the author of the text you are writing about. On the contrary, you are expected to maintain your own voice throughout the summary. Don't simply quote the author; instead use your own words to express your understanding of what you have read. After all, your summary is based on your interpretation of the writer's points or ideas. However, you should be careful not to create any misrepresentation or distortion by introducing comments or criticisms of your own.

#### Summarizing Shorter Texts (ten pages or fewer)

* Write a one-sentence summary of each paragraph.
* Formulate a single sentence that summarizes the whole text.
* Write a paragraph (or more): begin with the overall summary sentence and follow it with the paragraph summary sentences.
* Rearrange and rewrite the paragraph to make it clear and concise, to eliminate repetition and relatively minor points, and to provide transitions. The final version should be a complete, unified, and coherent.

#### Summarizing Longer Texts (more than ten pages)

* Outline the text. Break it down into its major sections—groups of paragraphs focused on a common topic—and list the main supporting points for each section.
* Write a one or two sentence summary of each section.
* Formulate a single sentence to summarize the whole text, looking at the author's thesis or topic sentences as a guide.
* Write a paragraph (or more): begin with the overall summary sentence and follow it with the section summary sentences.
* Rewrite and rearrange your paragraph(s) as needed to make your writing clear and concise, to eliminate relatively minor or repetitious points, and to provide transitions. Make sure your summary includes all the major supporting points of each idea. The final version should be a complete, unified, and coherent.

**5.2 Paraphrasing**

 Research paper can be defined as a document which contains a presentation of your argument, [ideas](https://www.projecttopics.org/), and opinions on a particular topic. [**Paraphrasing**](https://paraphrase.projecttopics.org/free-paraphrasing-tool) is important as it helps to add importance and value to your work. The main reasons for [research paraphrasing](https://paraphrase.projecttopics.org/free-paraphrasing-tool) is to add relevance to your work while taking into account the opinions and ideas of other authors. By paraphrasing it shows that you truly understand your work well enough and it interests you.

## ****How to Paraphrase for a Research Paper****

## ****Read and understand the viewpoints of other authors for effective paraphrasing:****

## Do not include your analysis or personal opinion or ideas in the paraphrased version. This is why understanding what the author means is important. Even when using different words or a different [writing](https://www.projecttopics.org/online-writing-tools) style or sentence structure, you still keep the original viewpoints of the author present in your paper.

### ****Make sure to translate the specific sentence, or passage you want to use in your own words:****

Don’t change the viewpoint of the author during [paraphrasing](https://paraphrase.projecttopics.org/free-paraphrasing-tool), make sure to pass the same information the author wants to pass to the audience/reader. Don’t just use thesaurus but point out what the author would like the readers to know even if you are not writing it out in the exact way the author did.

### ****Flip the sentence:****

You can also decide to flip the sentence for [proper research paraphrasing](https://paraphrase.projecttopics.org/free-paraphrasing-tool). You don’t have to start from the exact beginning the author started from, you can decide to start from different sections of the text or move from end to beginning or vice versa.

### ****Include citations :****

After successfully creating your own version of the chapter or sentence; make sure to recognize your sources as this ensure you effectively avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unethical practice of using words or ideas (either planned or accidental) of another author/ researcher without proper acknowledgement. If you copy another person’s work make sure to cite the source and place the copied parts in quotation marks. Copying and pasting the work of other authors make you seem lazy and reduces the relevance of your paper. This is one of the reasons why [paraphrasing](https://paraphrase.projecttopics.org/free-paraphrasing-tool) is important.

### ****Vary your introduction:****

Vary the way you introduce your sources, you can use words like “according to” “concludes that” or put the names of your sources in bracket.

### ****Avoid overuse of work from previous authors:****

In your original work, you can quote a limited amount from a previously written work because if you quote too much, you can get in trouble for copyright infringement. Although, there is no stated amount for the number of words to use before you stop being safe, try to use your initiative and know when you’re doing too much. Paraphrases are supposed to be just a small portion of the original work, if it becomes too much, it can be pointed out that the new work was gotten from the original one and that can make your work be seen as weak. For your paper to be relevant, it has to be able to have its own identity; i.e. stand on its own. Any paraphrased part of it should only be there to support and elucidate the [research paper](https://www.projecttopics.org/write-philosophy-research-paper-tips.html).

**Course Number**: 11

**Course Title:** **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**6. Writing a Bibliography**

**1. A book**

The author's surname, the author's first name (or initials), the title underlined, place of publication: publisher, date of publication.

**Example:**

Oxford University Press, / Oxford: / Spolsky, Bernard, / 1998. / Sociolinguistics,

 **2. A magazine**

Author, title of article between inverted commas. In title of the magazine underlined, volume number, issue number, (date): first and last pages of the article.

**Example:**

Volume 35, / Bernard, Roger, / N°4, / pp.41-42 / ` The Need To Revise Handwriting Systematically’. (October 1997): / In Forum,

**3. An encyclopaedia**

*-* Encyclopaedia title underlined, date, volume number, title of the article between inverted commas, page numbers.

**Example:**

pp.25-26 / 2005, / ` The Future of the Novel', / volume 8, / The Encyclopaedia Britannica,