

My favourite resources

Dan Harmon's
story circle



Simon Peyton-Jones
on writing great papers



Simon Peyton-Jones
on giving great talks



Jean-luc Doumont
on designing slides



16

Narrative design for academic storytelling

Workshop at CLE retreat 2022

Elizabeth Pankratz

The goals of this workshop:

1. Practice identifying the stages that all good stories have.
2. Understand that, as academics, we have to be storytellers too.
3. Learn that, the closer we adhere to this classic narrative structure, the more effective and compelling our papers and talks will be.

1

Tell me a story!

Abstract 1: Wray (2015)

We all know what a word is. Yet describing and defining the word is far from easy. So, what is the source of our intuition? Is the word a universal concept across human languages? Is it a cognitive necessity, enabling us to express our ideas using small recombinable units? Or are our intuitions more superficial, reflecting only the convention of where spaces are placed in writing? This chapter argues that the concept of the word looks vague because it is inherently so, and that our intuition is fooled into seeing greater definition by the twin influences of orthography and the noun as a strong prototype. With only some conventional word classes rendering truly independent units, writing imposes word breaks that don't always have much psychological reality. The consequence for linguistic theory is significant: a major difference between what the language learner knows and what corpora of texts can capture.

8

YOU NEED GO SEARCH FIND TAKE RETURN CHANGE

Abstract 3: Siddiqi (2018)

This chapter surveys the key principles of the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993, 1994). This summary distinguishes itself from other such summaries by focusing primarily on DM's morphological properties rather than its syntactic ones. Thus it focuses on morphological concerns such as the morpheme-based hypothesis, realizational morphology, morphological rules, segmentability, derivation vs. inflection, underspecification, productivity, blocking, allomorphy, and the interfaces of morphology with syntax and phonology. This chapter emphasizes metatheoretical concerns that would be of interest to students of comparative morphological theory with a significant focus on the strengths and weaknesses of Distributed Morphology as a theory of morphology. Secondary focus is also given to internal metatheoretic debates such as the status of roots in the grammar and the power of post-syntactic rules.

10

YOU NEED GO SEARCH FIND TAKE RETURN CHANGE

Abstract 2: Goodwin Davies & Embick (2020)

The representation of inflection is controversial: theories of morphological processing range from those that treat all inflectional morphemes as independently represented in memory to those that deny independent representation for any inflectional morphemes. Whereas identity priming for stems and derivational affixes is regularly reported, priming of inflectional affixes is understudied and has produced no clear consensus. This paper reports results from a continuous auditory lexical decision task investigating priming of plural inflectional affixes in English, in plural prime-target pairs such as *crimes* → *trees*. Our results show statistically significant priming facilitation for plural primes relative to phonological (*cleanse* → *trees*) and singular (*crime* → *trees*) controls. This finding indicates that inflectional affixes, like lexical stems, exhibit identity priming effects. We discuss implications for morphological theory and point to questions for further work addressing which representation(s) produce the priming effect.

YOU NEED GO SEARCH FIND TAKE RETURN CHANGE

9

Abstract 4: Frost et al. (2019)

Statistical learning (SL) is involved in a wide range of basic and higher-order cognitive functions and is taken to be an important building block of virtually all current theories of information processing. In the last 2 decades, a large and continuously growing research community has therefore focused on the ability to extract embedded patterns of regularity in time and space. This work has mostly focused on transitional probabilities, in vision, audition, by newborns, children, adults, in normal developing and clinical populations. Here we appraise this research approach and we critically assess what it has achieved, what it has not, and why it is so. We then center on present SL research to examine whether it has adopted novel perspectives. These discussions lead us to outline possible blueprints for a novel research agenda.

YOU NEED GO SEARCH FIND TAKE RETURN CHANGE

11

Structuring your research story

YOU: What's the focus?

NEED: What's the problem?

GO: What's your idea for solving it?

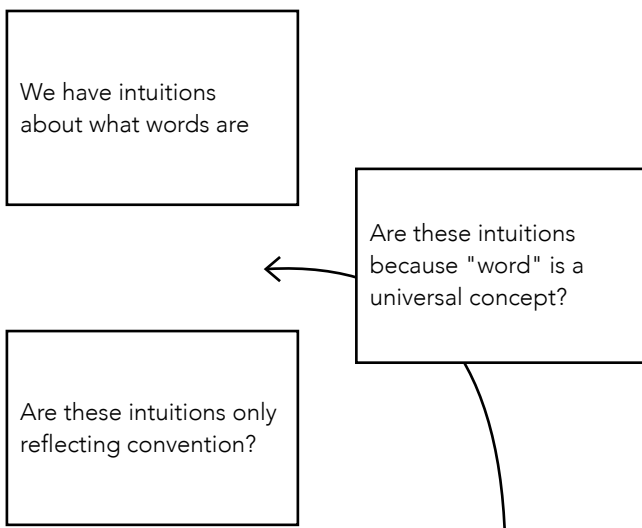
SEARCH: What's your procedure for solving it?

12

If this fill-in-the-blanks approach doesn't work for you, then maybe try **storyboarding** instead:

Write out all your ideas first, and then move them into an order that tells a good story.

I use slideshow programs for this, with one slide per idea:



14

FIND: What's the solution you found?

TAKE: Any roadblocks or surprises? What do they mean for your solution?

RETURN: What have we learned?

CHANGE: How is the world different now? Did we gain a new outlook? Any next steps?

13

Summary and take-home

YOU: We are academics.

NEED: We want to write engaging papers and give engaging talks.

GO: We can do this better if we know a bit about narrative design.

SEARCH: A framework for this that I like is Dan Harmon's story circle.

FIND: This framework can be applied directly to academic talks and papers.

TAKE: Research papers follow the correct steps by convention. Talks are freer, and thus harder (yet more important to structure well!).

RETURN: Now that you've practiced identifying the narrative flow in other people's work, finding it in your own work will be easier.

CHANGE: We've made our unconscious knowledge about storytelling conscious, and are now a bit better equipped to tell compelling stories about our research.

15