

Disciplinary Communication in Linguistics

I. Educational objectives

The educational objectives for disciplinary communication in Linguistics, and their implementation in our curriculum, follow from the philosophy that frequent writing is a means to learn, not just an expression of learning.

Writing

Students learn to

1. present linguistic data clearly and describe patterns or generalizations in the data;
2. formulate hypotheses to explain aspects of linguistic data;
3. evaluate alternative hypotheses in light of data and of linguistic theory;
4. use the writing conventions of linguistics, including conventions of data presentation, argumentation, citation, and style.

Speaking/presentation

All students have the opportunity to present original research in a classroom setting.

II. How the educational objectives are met in the curriculum

List of course(s) committed to disciplinary communications objectives

Ling 52, Syntax 1	Ling 102, Phonology 2
Ling 53, Semantics 1	Ling 113, Syntax 2
Ling 101, Phonology 1	Ling 116, Semantics 2

Ling 190 (Senior research)

All of these courses are required of Linguistics majors.

How each course contributes to the objectives

All listed courses contribute to educational objectives 1-4.

In a typical linguistics homework assignment, students produce a piece of writing in which they present data, discuss generalizations exemplified by the data, relate their discussion to the theory developed in class, entertain and evaluate alternative hypotheses, and argue for the analysis they believe to be the best.

All listed classes but Ling 52 and 190 give such assignments nearly weekly; resulting papers are at least 3 pages long, for a total of at least 24 pages. In Ling 52 students receive such an

assignment after every class, for a quarter total of at least 90 pages. Feedback is given on every assignment. Though drafts are not typically required, practice and feedback on every assignment inform the next one.

Instructors in these classes explicitly address expectations of writing assignments, both in class and in written feedback, and sometimes with model papers. Instruction and feedback touch on data presentation, large-scale paper organization, and approaches to argumentation, among other things.

Therefore Linguistics majors acquire a good deal of practice in writing.

Ling 190 (Senior research, 2 units)

This course is taken in conjunction with an upper-division linguistics course. Students enrolled in this course develop a research paper that satisfies their senior exit requirement. Enrollment is limited to 12, and the faculty member works closely with these students as they take their research projects through stages of project proposal, at least one rough draft, and a final draft of roughly 15 pages. In the context of this course students present their developing work to one another at least once, for roughly 20 minutes each.