

Seminar on Master's Thesis Writing

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Class 1: Academic Style

- Written language is relatively more complex than spoken language. Written language has **longer words**, it is lexically denser and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more **noun-based phrases** than verb-based phrases. Written texts tend to be longer and the language has more **grammatical complexity**, including more **subordinate clauses** and **more passives**.
- (Cooper, P.: 2011:2)

Computer Science Writing Style

- Exact
 - Repetition ok, understand your words, avoid ambiguity
- Clear
 - Clear headings and presentation of ideas
- Compact
 - Say only what is necessary, avoid wordiness/long sentences or paragraphs

Computer Science Writing Style (cont.)

- Objective
 - Acknowledge sources!
 - Point out positives and negatives!
- Smooth
 - Logical progression from paragraph to paragraph and from chapter to chapter
- Know the writing style required by the university!
 - [General writing guide](#)
 - [Writing style](#)
 - [International Writing style](#) (IEEE)

Grammar

- 3rd person rather than 1st person
- Emotionally neutral terms
 - “People suffering from dyslexia” vs. “People who have dyslexia”
- Be consistent in language use (BrE vs AmE)
- Passive voice
 - Draws attention to the thing/event described
 - Should not be overused

Grammar (cont.)

- Avoid bias – word choice important!
- No contractions (can't, aren't, ...)
- Keep phrasal verbs to a minimum

Useful Verbs in CS

- represent, analyze, apply, compare, demonstrate, illustrate, summarize, optimize,
- minimize, maximize, conclude, list, define, report, model, implement,
- design, consider, involve, simplify, generalize, perform, reduce, obey, fit, contain,
- increase, decrease, evaluate, predict, assign, require, satisfy,
- Several phrasal verbs useful:
 - consists of, scale up to, be based on sg., take into account sg., depend on sg,

Frequent Irregular Verbs in CS

- choose – chose – chosen
- find – found – found
- hide – hid – hidden
- hold – held – held
- lead – led – led
- lose – lost – lost
- rise – rose – risen
- seek – sought – sought
- show – showed – shown
- spin – spun – spun
- split – split – split
- spread – spread – spread
- stick – stuck – stuck

British English vs. American English

| British | American |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| colour | color |
| neighbour | neighbor |
| behaviour | behavior |
| favour | favor |
| honour | honor |
| metre (unit) | meter |
| meter (device) | meter |
| centre | center |
| analogue | analog |
| practice (noun) | practise |
| maths | math |
| speciality | specialty |