COMP495: Academic Presentation and Writing Skills
Document Macro-structure

Robert Dale
Robert.Dale@mq.edu.au
Assignments Reminder

• For Class #5 [Thursday 29th March]: Produce a bibliography for your thesis project
• For Class #6 [Thursday 5th April]: Write a 4–5 page paper describing your project
• For Week 12: Write a 2–3 page summary of a seminar you have attended
Discourse Models

a seagull ...

... it was white ...

LANGUAGE

MENTAL REPRESENTATION

REFERENCE

THE WORLD

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Today’s Agenda

• Declarative Formatting
• Citations and Reference Lists
• Macrostructure
Typographic Conventions

• When do you use bold, *italics*, ‘scare quotes’, SMALL CAPS . . . ?

• The Principle of Declarative Formatting: see
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Citations and References

• What is a citation and what is a reference?
• Parenthetical and syntactic citations
• What’s the purpose of citations and references?
• How do you format references?
Things That Appear in Reference Lists

• Entire Books
• Chapters in Edited Collections
• Papers in Conference or Workshop Proceedings
• Articles in Journals
• Technical Reports
• PhD Theses
Parenthetical and Syntactic Citations

• See http://www.ics.mq.edu.au/~rdale/resources/writingnotes/citations.html

• A syntactic citation:
  – However, as argued by Jones [1990], this approach is inefficient.

• A parenthetical citation:
  – However, the cosine method [Jones 1990] is inefficient.
Indicating the Rhetorical Role of a Citation

• Not so good:
  – There are many ways in which aggregation techniques have been used within sentence planning [Crowbar 1988].

• Possible interpretations for what we’ll find in Crowbar 1988:
  – a list of ways in which aggregation techniques have been used in sentence planning
  – one way in which aggregation techniques has been used in sentence planning
  – information about aggregation techniques
  – information about sentence planning
Indicating the Rhetorical Role of a Citation

• The not-so-good:
  – There are many ways in which aggregation techniques have been used within sentence planning [Crowbar 1988].

• Better:
  – There are many ways in which aggregation techniques have been used within sentence planning (see [Crowbar 1988] for a catalog of these).
Pinpointing the Evidence

• Not so good:
  – It has sometimes been argued (see, for example, [Jones 1966]) that graph unification can be more efficiently implemented than term unification.

• Better:
  – It has sometimes been argued (see, for example, [Jones 1966, Section 4.6]) that graph unification can be more efficiently implemented than term unification.
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Macrostructure and Microstructure

- Think of macrostructure as everything above the level of the paragraph
- Think of microstructure as being from the paragraph level down
Some Maxims about Structure

• Every story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end
• Tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them it, then tell them you’ve told them it
• First impressions count
• IMRAD: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion
• The Six Chapters of a Thesis
Rhetorical Structure Theory

- Basic idea:
  - The elements of a text are connected together by rhetorical relations
  - A text is coherent by virtue of the presence of these relations---if the text cannot be analysed in these terms then it is not coherent.
An Example

• Example 1:
  – I do research into classic car design.
  – The car I have studied most is the 1954 Holden.

• Example 2:
  – I do research into classic car design.
  – The car I have studied most is the 1997 Holden.
The Example Continued

• Example 1:
  – I do research into classic car design.
  – In particular, the car I have studied most is the 1954 Holden.

• Example 2:
  – I do research into classic car design.
  – But the car I have studied most is the 1997 Holden.
Relational Propositions

- ELABORATION(do-research, car-studied-most)
- CONTRAST(do-research, car-studied-most)
An RST Relation: Elaboration

I do research into The car I’ve
An RST Relation: Contrast

I do research into

The car I’ve
Beyond Pairs of Sentences

D1: You should come to the Northern Beaches Ballet performance on Saturday.
D2: I’m in three pieces.
D3: The show is really good.
D4: It got a rave review in the Manly Daily.
D5: You can get the tickets from the shop next door.
Nuclei and Satellites

- Relationships can consist of a nucleus and a satellite, or they can be multi-nucleur
- Most relations are of the nucleus-satellite form
- Satellites provide peripheral or supporting material
- Consequence: by removing satellites you can produce a summary of the text
- Corollary: if you remove nuclei you produce an incoherent text
A Relation Definition

• Relation name: Motivation
• Constraints on N:
  – Presents an action (unrealised) in which the hearer is the actor
• Constraints on S:
  – Comprehending S increases the hearer’s desire to perform the action presented in N
• The effect:
  – The hearer’s desire to perform the action presented in N is increased
Claims about RST

• Texts are analysed as hierarchical structures
• The theory is intended to be insensitive to text size
• Theory is restricted to monologue
• 100s of texts were analysed in developing the theory: virtually every text is said to have an RST analysis
• Analyses always in terms of a small set of relations -- around 25
The Relations in RST

- Circumstance
- Solutionhood
- Elaboration
- Background
- Enablement and Motivation
- Volitional and Non-volitional Cause and Result
- Condition and Otherwise
- Restatement and Summary
- Sequence, Contrast and Joint
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