Things practical and particular

Maximize your chances.

wisdom of Maribel Romero, Ellen Prince, and Gene Buckley

Tuesday, March 30 notes taken by Sophia Malamud

1 Abstract-writing

presentation by Maribel Romero

Have a good and novel analysis.

Before starting:

- You're showing you're better than others
- read literature (for 'novel' part of your good and novel analysis)
- exactly what is better in your analysis by comparison to previous accounts

An abstract is usually a 2-page summary
selling an idea
→ reviewers have to get it the first time they read it!
So, the presentation has to be extra-clear.

Divide abstract visually into Intro, Analysis, Conclusion.
Intro:

- Data/phenomenon
- The goal is ...

Analysis: Main part

Conclusion: Very important
→ 2 lines: "This is what you should take home"

Two abstracts given in good.pdf and better.pdf: The 'good' one has two introduction-like sections: the problem, and the phenomenon, which is funny.

The ‘better’ abstract has a previous-accounts section - very important! this is showing that you’re better than others and selling your idea!

The Analysis part should be structured - you can see the sub-divisions in the ‘better’ abstract, where the ‘good’ one just runs on.
An even better version would split the analysis (The claim: a uniform definite approach) visually, clearly structuring it into sub-arguments, labeled ‘first’ in bold (from “First, I show that the existential translation is not needed”), and ‘second’ in bold (from “Existential translation undesirable”)

In MsWord, making character spacing .98 instead of 1 gives one extra line.

Quote people → in particular, quote potential reviewers

LSA website - abstract guidelines (gotta be obeyed utterly and literally)

When selecting references on a particular topic with tons of literature about it - quote the earliest one, and then one after, that you think got it right.

In Europe - you show you’ve read everything, twice - encyclopedic reference lists.

2 Presenting papers: how to talk

presentation by Ellen Price

Advice: Write the paper before the abstract, until tenure. This will you help you achieve the following:

- Don’t have a ‘paper withdrawn’
- Stick to the abstract, as far as analysis

Oral presentation → don’t make it a murder mystery!

- Announce what you’re going to propose, and the structure of your argument, at the start.
- Give them a preview of where you’re going (FOR EACH THING) (same for writing)

Time your presentation (don’t have too much)

- There is never a complaint about finishing early.
- The shorter the paper/presentation, the more important it is to be precise with timing

Speak loudly and clearly

- It doesn't get better if they can't hear you!
- if there is a mike, use it - and make sure it's pointed at you, and it's on!

Turn off your phone

Do it all the time to beat the nervousness.
Rehearse

Speaking vs. reading the talk

- For short talks of up to 20 minutes - write down the talk.
- Job talk → DON'T READ IT, don't memorize anything but the outline. It HAS to sound spontaneous.

Handout for the data, slides for macro points.

Make enough handouts.

Equipment - make it smooth

Model your hearer - talk to non-Penn people.

3 Publishing papers

presentation by Gene Buckley

Don't let a paper become a monster.
Delete a section that 'should be doubled in size to do the subject justice' → make it a separate paper.

For each section, ask yourself and tell the reader why this section is there.

If necessary, completely rewrite it.
A personal anecdote from Gene, on this topic:
My paper at NLLT on Kashaya extrametricality (appeared 1994) went through two rounds of reviews, and in responding to comments I enlarged the paper to 90 pages as a double-spaced manuscript. At the end, in the summer of 1993, the editor told me "By the way, the ms. should only be 60 pages long." I spent one insane weekend hacking it to shreds, and the result was a 59 page paper that read much better and had lost a number of alternative analyses and non-crucial excursions. I found it a lot easier to make this ruthless change in organization and focus than to make the previous incremental adjustments.

Often it is better to present your analysis first, and then do lit. review as showing why others are wronger than you.

Give to others to read for organisational flaws.

Make absolutely sure to cite all potential reviewers!

Only submit to one journal at a time!

Co-authoring ok - make it balanced (two papers with each co-author, with order switched!).

For the rest of this presentation, see Gene's handout!