Guidelines on Academic Writing Tasks at the English Department

Contents

1. General information

Writing skills are at the heart of academic life, both for students, who have to complete all manner of written assignments during their studies such as short essays or longer research-based papers, and for teaching staff and researchers, who write articles, monographs, reviews, research proposals, etc. Thus, a command of academic writing skills is central to the set of competences that students acquire during their university career and beyond.

This guide is primarily intended for first-year students at the English Department with the aim of clarifying the different requirements for academic writing assignments in Language Skills and Culture (LSC), Linguistics, and Literature. It aims to set out the competences that are specific to particular approaches or text types within the individual sections, while also highlighting the fact that many academic writing skills are transferable across disciplines. The guide arose from a workshop held at the English Department in 2023, one outcome of which was that students would appreciate a document that outlines the requirements of different tasks across the sections while pointing out key transferable skills.

The guide presents sample written assignments from the three sections, which have been commented on by the members of staff at the English Department, primarily (but not exclusively) by instructors in the respective sections. The comments point out what the assignments do well both in terms of skills specific to the discipline in question, and in terms of general, transferable writing competences. The final section of the guide attempts to consolidate the main ideas of the individual sections and has some useful references for further reading.

This guide comes with a disclaimer in that while it attempts to highlight the key requirements of particular writing tasks, and offers assessment of sample student assignments, it is not in any way exhaustive. In the sample student work below, there may well be other important aspects that are not commented on in depth; sometimes there may be errors in use of English; there may occasionally be structural or content-related deficits that are not highlighted. Equally, students may receive feedback on elements of their work at the English Department that are not explicitly discussed below. The document is meant as a general guideline only and is not an all-encompassing set of criteria that can be used for students to expect a particular grade.

2. Language Skills and Culture essays

The Language Skills and Culture (LSC) section has a dual teaching focus: academic writing skills and Anglophone cultural studies. In the cultural studies component, students are introduced to key issues connected to identity politics in Britain and the USA, such as national identity, post-colonialism, consumerism and sexualities, and then, in the second year, examine how social and political issues (e.g. social exclusion, race/ethnicity) are represented in contemporary media texts such as film and TV series.

Teaching academic writing skills is the central component of the Language Skills and Culture (LSC) section. First-year students are introduced to the basics of how to use paragraphs to structure ideas, how to develop consistent argumentation, how to find and use appropriate academic sources, etc. At MA level, students are taught how to develop the skills required for writing longer papers such as academic articles.

The main task type that is used to implement and practice academic writing skills in the LSC section is the argument-type essay. Students are required to write short (approx. 1000 to 1500-word) research-based essays on topics connected to British and American culture. The template for the task is the "five-paragraph essay" in which students have to argue for or against a particular position on an issue, such as "Examine whether there is gender equality in sports in the UK". The essay should provide three arguments that support one side only on that issue (in the above, the easier position is no doubt to argue that gender equality does not exist in the UK sports sector, but, in theory, a writer could argue the contrary).

The LSC essays are designed to practice key academic writing skills and have the following over-all structure:

- An introduction that leads the reader into the topic, defines key terms and presents the thesis (the writer's position on the topic)
- Three main body paragraphs, each offering a distinct argument that supports the thesis by presenting data, expert opinion, etc. as evidence
- A conclusion that consolidates the arguments and puts the issue back into a broader context

That may seem straightforward, but it actually involves a wide range of (transferable) academic writing skills such as defining key terms, providing evidence, elaborating thereon, as well as key research skills such as finding and appropriately documenting relevant academic sources, all while using suitably academic English.

A sample first-year LSC essay

A sample essay with comments is provided below. Remember that the comments are not exhaustive but aim to outline central academic writing skills. Some competences may be specific to the task (such as using data on cultural/social issues as the "primary data") but many are transferable skills par excellence such as maintaining consistent argumentation.

Examine Whether Views on Transgender Issues are Divided Along Political Lines in the USA.

In recent years, US opposition to transgender issues may have appeared to transcend party lines. While Trump's presidency was dubbed "The Discrimination Administration" by LGBTQ+ advocates (Sosin), Biden's term in office began with a "record-breaking" number of anti-transgender bills in 2020 and 2021 (Krishnakumar). Upon brief consideration, these facts would suggest that Republicans and Democrats are unanimous in their opposition to the transgender community, which comprises individuals "whose gender identit[ies are] different than the sex they were assigned at birth" – in contrast to cisgender individuals, whose identities do correspond to their assigned sex ("What Does the Bible"). However, a closer inspection reveals that the two parties differ strongly in their opinions on transgender issues across the board. Thus, this essay will argue that the US population is strongly divided along party lines in its views on transgender issues by analysing the parties' acceptance of gender transitioning, their attitudes towards trans cultural visibility, and their opinions on whether transgender individuals should have the same fundamental rights as their cisgender counterparts.

A first indication that views on transgender issues are divided along political lines in the US is the difference in the political parties' acceptance of gender transitioning, which denotes the actions that transgender individuals can undertake to "match their outward appearance more closely with their gender identity" ("Understanding

Here the introduction provides some context on the issue (the political to-and-fro of LGBTQ+ issues in politics.

The writer provides a definition of the key term for the essay. However, the writer should use a more neutral, academic source rather than a Christian website.

The essay states a clear thesis that reflects the wording of the set question, and that takes a clear stance on the matter. It then lists arguments to come below - that should be kept concise.

In this type of assignment, the introduction should be one concise paragraph. The main body paragraphs each state the main claim of the paragraph in the first sentence (the topic sentence). It also links back to the thesis by echoing the keywords thereof.

Here the writer clarifies the point by explaining what transitioning refers to.

Gender"), such as changing their clothes, names or pronouns, or under-going medical procedures. These undertakings are critical issues, according to Mandy Giles, founder of Parents of Trans Youth, because they allow transgender people to be themselves (Narea and Cineas). However, the political parties in the US differ in their opinions on whether these procedures should be encouraged. This is apparent in a 2022 survey on transgender issues which showed that, while Democrats are generally more accepting, Republicans tend to oppose all expressions of gender identity that deviate from being stereotypically feminine or masculine ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"). For example, one of the survey's questions asked respondents whether they would encourage boys and girls to wear clothes typically associated with the opposite gender. While girls would be encouraged to wear boyish clothing by 25% of Democrats versus only 9% of Republicans, they would be discouraged from doing so by only 9% of Democrats versus 30% of Republicans, with similar numbers regarding the wearing of girls' clothes by boys. This means that more than twice as many liberals as conservatives see cross-dressing positively, and, inversely, more than three times as many GOP voters as Democrats oppose cross-dressing. Since cross-dressing means that individuals are not required to conform to gender stereotypes, this suggests a dichotomy in US politics: while Republicans enforce what transgender activists have considered to be "an oppressive binary sex-gender system" (Hilton-Morrow and Battles 6), Democrats support a less narrow definition of gender, and are thus consistently more accepting of gender transitioning. Not only are they

more supportive of non-gender-conforming clothing choices than conservatives, but they are also half as likely to oppose trans-affirming medical interventions such as taking puberty blockers (39% versus 83% of Republicans who are opposed), undergoing hormone therapy (33% versus 80%) or having breast surgery (36% versus 77%) ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"), which are all important for trans individuals to "feel [c]omfortable in [their] own skin" (Edwards). This marked deviation in the two parties' acceptance of gender transitioning procedures further supports the idea that the two parties have different aims: whereas Democrats favour transgender acceptance, Republicans oppose a new, non-binary gender system – a dichotomy that leaves the views of the American population on transgender issues strongly divided along political lines.

Similarly, opinions on the transgender issue of social acceptance also indicate that views on transgender issues are divided along political lines in the US. Just as Republicans are less accepting of cross-dressing and surgery – visible signs of gender transitioning – they are also more likely to believe that transgender communities should be less visible and thus less accepted in society. When asked whether societal acceptance of transgender people had "gone too far", was "about right" or had "not gone far enough," over half of Republicans (59%) thought societal acceptance had gone too far, in contrast with one sixth of Democrats (16%). On the other side of the spectrum, half of Democrats (50%) thought society had "not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender," in comparison with only one tenth of Republicans (10%)

The writer provides some more data which, while still on the topic of the paragraph, looks at a slightly different aspect.

There is a consolidating sentence that brings the paragraph to a close.

Here the writer introduces a new and distinct point that also provides support for the thesis.

Here the writer could transition to the survey more explicitly, e.g. "This is corroborated by a survey on acceptance..."

("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues in Schools"). This shows that there is an inverse trend in US politics: the majority in both parties are pushing in opposite directions, with liberals advocating more acceptance and conservatives advocating less. Furthermore, this difference in attitude is also visible in other instances, such as opinions on whether school-books should be censored when they contain transgender characters. While over half of Republicans (53%) support the banning of these books, over two-thirds of Democrats (69%) oppose this censorship ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"), which would hide transgender people from public sight and thus signal that they are not socially accepted (Torchinsky). Indeed, the recent efforts of conservatives to ban trans books from schools and libraries have been deemed a "battle in a larger war against LGBTQ acceptance in schools and society," wrote reporter Jake Zuckerman, while journalist Hayes Brown added that "the goal is legislating transgender people out of the public sphere." This shows that Republicans aim for the reduced visibility and thus acceptance of the transgender community, in stark contrast with Democrats, who appear to support trans visibility, as shown in the statistics above. Thus, opinions on social acceptance, a major issue for the transgender community, are not agreed upon by Democrats and Republicans, further suggesting a divide on transgender issues along party lines in the US.

  Another indication that opinions on transgender issues diverge along political lines in the US is the political parties' disagreements about whether or not transgender and cisgender individuals should have

Again, throughout the paragraph, support is provided through data and statistics. The data is taken from YouGov, which is generally a reliable source of data. The writer could, however, have used statistics from more than this one source in the para to have more comprehensive evidence overall.

There is some attempt by the writer to elaborate on the relevance of the data by using secondary quotes. Rather than relying exclusively on journalistic sources, however, the writer could have used quotes from academic sources to have a stronger research base for the essay.

The writer presents a third argument for the thesis. Overall, the essay has three distinct and relevant arguments in support of the thesis.

equal rights. Whether these rights concern job safety, access to healthcare, or serving in the military, the two sides of the political divide consistently show opposite opinions, with liberals seeking equal rights while conservatives support more discriminatory policies ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"). For example, although 32% of Republicans support transgender people being allowed to serve in the military, more than twice as many Democrats (71%) do so. In contrast, only 15% of Democrats actively oppose military equality, while almost four times as many Republicans (59%) do so ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"), again showing that the political right and the political left are strongly divided in their opinions. Furthermore, this divide has political consequences, resulting in consecutive administrations undoing each other's work for or against transgender equality. Indeed, after Obama allowed openly transgender individuals to serve in the military, Trump repealed those rights until Biden introduced them again upon his election (Sanders). This constant change illustrates how divided Republicans and Democrats are on allowing military service for transgender individuals, which is important for them to be seen as equals in society, as testified by Navy officer Brock Stone: when the Republicans repealed transgender military service rights, removing transgender individuals from their jobs because of their identities, this sent the message that they were "not welcome" and "not respected as [themselves]," he said (Dwyer). However, the military is not the only place in which transgender individuals face inequality due to their identity: the two major parties are equally split on whether companies should be able to

fire and refuse to hire employees for being transgender ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"), which would mean that transgender individuals would not have the same opportunities to have basic job security as their cisgender counterparts. While 65% of Democrats strongly oppose companies being able to choose not to employ transgender individuals on the basis of their gender, only half as many Republicans (33%) do so, and inversely, twice as many Republicans (18%) as Democrats (7%) strongly support such measures ("Daily Survey: Transgender Issues"). Since choosing not to employ transgender individuals because of their identity is the definition of "anti-transgender discrimination," as clarified by the landmark Supreme Court case Bostock v Clayton County, which opposed such discrimination "in employment" ("Know Your Rights"), this shows that Republicans and Democrats are truly divided along political lines on issues as essential as equal rights for cisgender and transgender individuals.

As has been demonstrated in the preceding paragraphs, views on transgender issues diverge significantly along political lines in the US. While Democrats consistently support transgender individuals to be themselves, to be accepted in society and to have equal rights, Republicans consistently battle for the opposite. In 2023, "at the height of backlash against trans visibility" (Mendez), it is paramount to recognise the importance of this divide, which makes the fight for transgender issues a precarious battleground. If recent administrations have all undone each other's work, see-sawing between an anti-trans and pro-transgender orientation with every change in political office (Sanders),

The conclusion initially offers a brief consolidation of the argument, reiterating the overall claim of the thesis.

There is an attempt to put the discussion back into the bigger picture here, looking at the impact of political toing and fro-ing on transgender issues.

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then transgender rights are far from guaranteed, even when those rights

seem basic: fundamentally, "transgender people just want to exist," says

trans activist and actress Laverne Cox, but even this remains a struggle

"in the face of the propaganda and the bills trying to banish our exist-

ence" (Mendez). However, for transgender individuals to "just […] ex-

ist," the divide between Democrats and Republicans must first be ad-

dressed, unless transgender issues are to remain an unstable battle-

ground forever.

[1488 words]

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The sources are acknowledged and documented (here: using MLA 8), in ac-cordance with aca-demic practice. The bibliography demon-strates a good deal of research with a variety of sources. Quite a lot of the sources are journalistic ones, how-ever, rather than aca-demic ones, and the reliance on one main source for the data is noted above. The writer could have done more extensive research to find more academic sources.

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Overall, this essay implements the key skills required for an essay in LSC. It has a substantive, focused introduction that leads the reader clearly into the topic and provides an overview of the situation for transgender individuals in the current political climate. It defines its terms and presents a clear thesis statement that argues for one side only, i.e. that views on transgender issues are divided along political lines. This thesis is then echoed in the topic sentences of the main body paragraphs, which offer three distinct arguments to prove that thesis. Each paragraph provides recent, relevant data to prove its claims. Importantly, given the comparative nature of the thesis, data are provided for both sides of the political divide to highlight the differences between their stances on a variety of trans issues. This evidence is then elaborated upon with reference to secondary sources which reveal more about the ramifications of the parties being divided on these issues. Each paragraph is consolidated appropriately before moving on to the next one. The conclusion briefly summarises the three main arguments put forward in the essay and points out, using secondary sources, just how uncertain the situation is for trans individuals with every change in political administration.

In terms of language, this essay is written in fluent English using an appropriate academic register. Stylistically, it is laudable that the writer tries to vary the phrasing used, so as not to always repeat "Democrats" and "Republicans", which could become quite tedious over the course of the essay.

Alternatives used include: "liberals", "conservatives", "the GOP", "the political right and the political left", "the two sides of the political divide" and "the two major parties".

Despite the essay's strengths, there are still a few areas that could be improved upon. Although the introduction provides a definition for its keyword, it would have been preferable to have used a more neutral and authoritative source. Likewise, although the data used in the paragraphs come from a reliable source and are recent, one should try to vary one's sources to craft a more comprehensive argument. Similarly, it would be important to balance the journalistic sources used in the elaboration with more academic ones.

A sample essay from the Writing Skills and Media Analysis module

The second-year LSC module "Writing Skills and Media Analysis" (WSMA) builds upon the skills acquired in the first year. The module continues to develop and consolidate academic writing skills, but with a focus on media representation of issues in US and UK media products such as film and TV series (e.g. how are issues connected to sexualities represented in US TV comedy?). Students are introduced to the fundamentals of media analysis such as technical codes, elements of mise-en-scène, etc, and how they can be used a part of an interpretation.

The main writing assignment continues to be the argument-type essay, but with a focus on interpreting how issues are represented in the media text. Students have to put forward an interpretation with a thesis that engages with concepts from cultural and media studies (such as homonormativity below), with 3-4 main body paragraphs that all support the thesis.

The overall structure is similar to the first-year essay included above, with the key difference that the "primary data" is the media text in question.

- An introduction that leads the reader into the topic, defines key terms and presents the thesis (the writer's position on the topic)
- Three or four main body paragraphs, each offering a distinct argument that supports the thesis by presenting evidence (plot, action, dialogue, but also media codes such as shot size, editing, elements of setting, etc.)
- A conclusion that consolidates the arguments and puts the issue back into a broader context.

A sample WSMA is given below.

Homonormativity in *Grace and Frankie* (Netflix 2015-2022)

In 2022, a study by LGBT media advocacy group GLAAD found that LGBT representation in American TV series had reached an all-time high, with nearly 12% of regular characters belonging to the LGBT community ("Where We Are"). However, despite this historic increase in the visibility of queer characters, GLAAD was quick to stress the importance of differentiating between the quantity and the quality of such portrayals. In this regard, the group echoed concerns already raised by media scholar Jimmy Kalamaras over a decade ago when he warned of a "new form of homophobia [that] is more dangerous than the previous one because it hides behind facades of tolerance and acceptance" (471). He argued that, even when television shows appear to be inclusive and to give visibility to same-sex relationships, they often continue to disregard sexual difference. This erasure of sexual difference and the construction of gay identity as an assimilation into heteronormative structures and congruent gender roles are discourses of what Lisa Duggan terms "homonormativity." Homonormative paradigms are deeply woven into the fabric of our culture, continually increasing the social acceptance of certain forms of "sexual dissidence" but not others (Stryker). This pattern can be seen in the Netflix sitcom *Grace and Frankie* (2015-2022), which follows, among others, the lives of Robert and Sol, an elderly couple who leave their wives to be together. The show is about embracing one's true self, including one's sexuality, and ostensibly portrays homosexuality as possible and normal. However, by reproducing conditions of inclusion that

The introduction in this type of essay should a) lead the reader into the topic by offering some context on the issue, b) introduce the theoretical concept used, c) briefly introduce the media product to be discussed and d) present a thesis that makes a clear claim. Here the writer initially offers some context on the rise of LGBT representation on screen before going on to point out that such representations typically adhere to homonormative paradigms. He/she explains the concept before introducing the media product and presenting a clearly signposted thesis statement that also outlines the framework of the essay.

portray gay men as sexless "good citizens" who conform to norms like marriage and stated "gay" (rather than, for example, bisexual) identity, the sitcom depicts a favored sexual dissident as a normative symbol that stands in for the LGBT community. Hence, this essay will argue that *Grace and Frankie* supports the culturally embedded narrative of homonormativity in its depictions of marriage, sex, and sexual identity.

One indicator of the show's homonormativity is its portrayal of same-sex marriage. Culturally, same-sex marriage has been a key way in which certain sexual dissidents have become accepted into state ideologies of family and citizenship, while others have not (Browne & McCartan 187). *Grace and Frankie*'s depiction of Robert and Sol's marriage illustrates that, despite the inroads made for sexual politics, inclusion through "marriage equality" is an exclusionary assimilation. One example of this assimilation is Robert and Sol's coming out scene at a restaurant, where they reveal their 20-year love affair and express their wish to marry ("The End" 2:35-5:18). The scene builds tension with frequent cuts, moments of silence, and close-ups of everyone's faces, while a doubtful Sol equivocates. When Robert interrupts him to let their wives know that they are in love, the atmosphere shifts. The large depth-of-field and well-lit restaurant interiors now replicate the gay couple's sense of being seen and out in the open. Sol, visibly uncomfortable and doubtful just a moment before, is suddenly overcome with absolute certainty, declaring their intention to marry. The scene marks two marriages falling apart to make room for another and therein reflects the show's blind conformity to the institution of marriage. Its technical codes underline how

The main body paragraph in this type of essay should a) include a topic sentence that echoes the thesis statement and puts forward the first claim to be discussed, b) provide clarification of the theoretical concept used with reference to an authoritative source, c) offer media evidence of the aspect of the theory being discussed, d) elaborate on that illustration, linking the media reading back to the original claim, ideally with support from a secondary source to give it more substance, and e) consolidate what was argued in the paragraph.

Robert and Sol's feelings shift from diffidence and apprehension to relative ease and confidence. Hence, embracing marriage brings peace to their hearts and, true to homonormative mores, they find certitude in a heteronormative institutionalization of their love. The show's opening credits reflect this assimilation on a conceptual level, using two pairs of wedding cake toppers to summarize the characters' lives throughout marriage, parenthood, and old age. The camera moves up a wedding cake from tier to tier, until it reaches the top, where the cake-topper-husbands kiss, causing the cake to fall apart and their wives to fall with it. While the disintegrated cake could be read as a challenge to the institution of marriage, the show quickly reveals that marriage is precisely the structure Robert and Sol are trying to rebuild with each other. The wedding cake symbolizes marriage as an institutionalized and accepted form of love. Thus, by framing the love between two men as an institution, the show reduces gayness to the traditional heteronormative conception of a relationship, protecting more conservatively minded viewers from the reality of sexual difference. In an interview with *TV Insider*, Martin Sheen frames the marriage between his and Sam Waterstone's character as "the show's nod to the gay community" (Logan). His statement underlines, if unintentionally, how the show's focus on same-sex marriage as the representation of both equality and gayness reinforces homonormative structures.

Another indicator of the sitcom's homonormativity is its depiction of sex and intimacy, or rather the lack thereof, between the gay couple. Such erasure of the physical expression of homosexuality is a

Here the writer presents the first indicator of the series adhering to homonormative portrayals, i.e. its forcing a homosexual relationship to adhere to the heteronormative institution of marriage. It presents some theory that shows that same-sex marriage is a way of making homosexual relationships acceptable for heteronormative audiences. It then shows that rather than Sol and Robert just coming out to their wives and living together, they immediately declare their intention to marry, i.e. to leave one marriage for another. There is some nice media reading of this scene as well as of another one that looks at the symbolism of the cake toppers from the opening credits. The elaboration with regard to Sheen's comment in an interview could have been articulated a little more clearly or perhaps replaced with more authoritative secondary support on the institutionalisation of homonormativity.

common feature of homonormative media products, which tend "to engage with homosexuality as an abstraction, not as real sexual desire or sexual practice" (Doran 99). Indeed, the entire first season of *Grace and Frankie* does not hint at, let alone show, Robert and Sol having sex. The closest the show comes to this is in "The Bachelor Party," when the couple have to deal with an enraged homophobic guest who is offended by their "lifestyle" (23:19) and who calls Robert a "faggot" (23:26). As Robert cocks his arm to punch the guest, he is stopped by Sol, who throws the bigot out the front door (23:27-23:59). Left alone together, Sol says to Robert, "You almost hit a man in our foyer … you are so hot right now," the camera showing them in front of their closed front door, within the space of their home, where they can be whoever they want to be (24:00-24:07). However, the erotic tension is broken immediately as they embrace in a kiss that lasts all of one second, and then walk into the kitchen holding hands (24:08-24:18). Even after this bold proclamation of attraction, the couple are reduced to sexless, hand-holding friends. This type of de-sexualization characterizes Robert and Sol's relationship throughout, with the pair in many ways resembling the intro's wedding cake toppers come to life: stiff and unnatural in their affection towards each other. In this regard, they manifest asexual projections of gay men, which is in keeping with Epstein's notion of homosexuality adhering to an assimilationist and essentialist model (34-35). What makes this de-sexualization of the homosexual characters all the more notable is that it stands in stark contrast to the way the show approaches sexuality so naturally when it comes to its straight characters. For example, both

Robert's ex-wife, Grace, and his daughter, Brianna, are shown in bed and in various states of undress with a variety of male partners throughout the series. However, the only time that either of the gay protagonists is shown semi-naked in bed is the morning after Sol cheats on Robert by having sex with his ex-wife, Frankie ("The Vows" 15:27-17:41), once more revealing the show's prioritization of portrayals of sexual relations between a man and a woman. Thus, while the show explicitly celebrates heterosexuality, it stigmatizes gay sexuality and erases homosexual difference, thereby supporting the narrative of homonormativity.

A final indicator of homonormativity in *Grace and Frankie* is its lack of sexual diversity, and, especially, its erasure of bisexuality. Rather than acknowledging "gender-plural desires" (Kneen 363), the media tends to be guilty of monosexism, which is "the common perception that homosexual and heterosexual are the only legitimate sexualities" (Spencer 3). Thus, in *Grace and Frankie*, Sol is steadfastly labeled as gay, although the show presents evidence that he is bisexual, such as when he sleeps with his ex-wife ("The Vows" 15:27-17:41). While cleaning out their old house, Sol is overcome by emotions over breaking their family apart and is comforted by Frankie. The scene is shot in soft, natural lighting, underlined by a guitar and piano cover of Erik Satie's "Gynopédie No. 1*"*. Its long, sustained rhythm creates a sense of floating through space and time, which Sol and Frankie do, nostalgically recalling their past life together. The pair, both dressed in orange and filmed against a background of yellow walls and warm colors, blend harmoniously into their environment. In perfect sync with each other and with what used to

Here, the paragraph focuses on the last indicator of homonormativity in the show, i.e. the erasure of bisexuality. This adherence to monosexism is backed up by theory before some evidence of Sol's being bisexual is offered. The first example provides detailed media reading of the scene in which he sleeps with his ex-wife. The second is shorter but shows his complex feelings for Frankie. However, more evidence could have been offered to show the rhetorical hoops Sol jumps through to reaffirm his gayness to Robert. This could take the form of quotes from the dialogue, for instance. The secondary support in the elaboration is good.

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be their shared home, they obviously feel a deep sense of attraction and succumb to sexual desire. While this scene clearly reaffirms Sol's bisexuality, he later jumps through all kinds of rhetorical hoops to reaffirm his gayness to Robert. This is not the only time Sol's love and affection for Frankie is a source of conflict in their relationship. On another occasion, Robert is upset that Sol calls his ex-wife his "soulmate" (20:57). The use of a wide-angle lens causes an extension distortion of Sol's face as he then tries to justify himself to Robert, as if caught in a lie ("The Lockdown" 20:55-21:57). These examples define Sol's sexuality as fluid and incoherent, based on romantic and sexual desire that exists along a spectrum (Hilton Morrow and Battles). Nonetheless, bisexuality is never addressed on a textual level. This also applies to Oliver, Sol and Robert's young neighbor, who is engaged to a woman, but whom the older couple believe is gay due to his passion for musical theatre, fashion and dance – pursuits which are usually coded as homosexual for men (Halperin 12). Rather than having Oliver declare that he is simply bisexual and in a committed relationship with a woman, thereby offering another, more inclusive, view of queerness (Squires), the show ultimately reveals him to have been a closeted homosexual who ends up following Sol and Robert's path – the seemingly only possible path in the show – and coming out as "gay". In enforcing a clear classification of Sol and Oliver as "gay," *Grace and Frankie* constructs sexual orientation as fixed rather than fluid. By erasing bisexuality, it fails to account for the complexity of people's sexual identities and orientations, further illustrating how the

show reduces sexuality in all its complexity to the simplistic and inaccurate binaries of homonormativity.

As demonstrated above, *Grace and Frankie*'s representations of marriage, sex, and sexual identity are reductive and fit into homonormative conceptions of sexuality. The show normalizes "gay" identity and reproduces constellations of power that enforce normative sexual expectations and erase sexual difference. Its homonormativity ensures that queerness is represented "safely" for heteronormative audiences, as the power, hegemony, and hierarchies within and between sexual dissidents remain intact. However, queer representation is precisely about the difference, the sex, and the ambiguity that *Grace and Frankie* does not portray. In reality, sexuality is about expression, not statements. It is messy, ambiguous, and fluid. Sexual lives are inherently created in and through multiple axes of difference, affection, and desire. Therefore, in its representation of sexual identity as one-dimensional and fixed, *Grace and Frankie* does not fully take its own message of embracing one's sexuality to heart.

The conclusion should summarise the arguments discussed in the essay and use a recontextualisation strategy, such as looking at the bigger picture regarding the issue at hand. This conclusion summarises the main points, but does not really have a clear recontextualisation strategy. While it does refer back to *Grace and Frankie* not taking its own message of embracing one's sexuality to heart, it could have more substance, via relevant quotes from, or links to, secondary material.

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In general, this paper adheres to the structural guidelines of LSC papers on media analysis and demonstrates the skills required when applying a theoretical concept to a media product. The essay begins well by offering some contextualisation on the representation of same-sex couples on screen

before linking it to the concept of homonormativity, which is defined using an authoritative academic source. The media product to be discussed is then briefly introduced and a concise and arguable thesis statement is provided. To prove this thesis, the writer breaks down the theory of homonormativity into its component parts and addresses a distinct aspect of it in each paragraph. Each of these aspects is explained briefly in the clarification that comes after the topic sentences of the respective paragraphs and then evidence thereof is found in the media text. This evidence takes the form of various mise-en-scène and technical codes and is usually elaborated upon with further links to theory on homonormativity. Each paragraph is consolidated with regard to the thesis before moving on to the next. The conclusion briefly summarises the three arguments put forward in the essay and makes a link back to the introduction to bring the essay full circle.

However, despite adhering well to the structural guidelines and demonstrating some persuasive media analysis at times, this essay would benefit from more concrete media analysis to prove its points. Occasionally, the phrasing is a little wordy and thus individual examples take up large portions of the paragraph, leaving little room for others to be developed in sufficient detail. Another weakness is that the conclusion does not really have a clear recontextualisation strategy. It would benefit from looking at the implications of homonormative representations for society at large or it could examine *Grace and Frankie's* place within the bigger picture of LGBTQ representations and their reception.

3. Linguistics papers

The Linguistics section introduces students to English language studies. Whereas, in the first year of the B.A. programme, students receive insight into the basic notions and concepts of core and applied (synchronic) linguistics, in subsequent years they take courses on English historical linguistics (HotEL) and on a wide array of different topics that are of central interest to language studies: e.g., language variation and change, language structure, language use, phonetics and phonology, as well as language and the mind.

Writing an empirical paper constitutes the main modality of assessment in seminars offered by the Linguistics section. In a successful paper, students present their own empirical work in linguistics against the backdrop of previous empirical and theoretical research related to the topic under investigation. Such a paper can either replicate a previous study with a different dataset, address methodological shortcomings of previous studies, or contribute to the corpus of research in an area of interest. Students should (a) successfully identify a (thematic and/or methodological) research gap in the existing literature and formulate one or several appropriate research questions/hypotheses that address the gap; (b) demonstrate a sound theoretical understanding of the phenomenon they investigate by engaging critically with previous sources; (c) describe as exhaustively as possible the data and method used to answer the research questions/hypotheses; (d) present and elaborate on the results, and (e) discuss them in light of previous studies. The overarching idea is to enter into a productive dialogue with existing research and to help drive the discipline forward.

While the absolute length of each paper varies depending on the stage of the degree programme, the overall structure and the relative length of each section are invariant:

- Introduction: ~ 10% of paper
- Previous research/ Theoretical background: ~ 20%
- Data and methodology: ~ 20%
- Results/analysis (and discussion): ~ 40%
- Conclusion: ~ 10%

* Note that the word count excludes the title page, the table of contents, the list of references, and the annex/appendix.

The *Manual for Papers in English Linguistics* provides ample information on the word count of individual papers as well as on the key characteristics of individual sections. It offers binding guidelines for the writing of papers in linguistics at the English Department and is available for download from the department's website:

www.es.uzh.ch/en/studies/studyadvice/furtherinformation/downloads.html.

A sample paper for the module "Introduction to English Linguistics" is provided below. Remember that the feedback given is not exhaustive.

Hesitation disfluencies in psychopathic speech: a case study of Ted Bundy

[your name]

Introduction to Linguistics, Part I (Seminar Group [number])

Instructor: [name]

Word count: 3,990

Postal address
Email address
Student ID

[month and year of deadline]

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

In the 1970s, numerous young women in America were kidnapped, raped and killed by the notorious serial killer and psychopath Ted Bundy. In spite of his two successful escapes from prison and his nine-year long appeal against his death sentence on death row after he was captured for the third and last time in Florida, Bundy was eventually executed by electric chair in 1989 ("Ted Bundy Biography": 2014). On January 23rd, a day before Bundy's execution, Dr. James Dobson held an interview with him that was mainly focused on the question of how pornography influenced Bundy's development to become a serial killer; Dobson and Bundy thus talked for around 30 minutes not only about Bundy's addiction to pornography and about the murders he had committed, but also about his childhood and his imminent execution. This interview is the data that will be worked with in this paper, since when one listens to the interview it is striking that Bundy's speech flow is distinctively interrupted by various silent pauses, repetitions, *uh*s and *uhm*s; these so-called hesitation disfluencies are the linguistic variable I will investigate in this paper. The various forms and implications of hesitations disfluencies have been examined and discussed in previous studies whose results are often similar, namely, that the frequency of hesitation disfluencies increases when the utterances are cognitively more demanding (Corley and Stewart 2008; Castro and James 2014; Mahl 1947). Yet, in the context of psychopathic language, the variable of hesitation disfluencies has never been the main focus of a study. There are, however, indications that for psychopaths expressing emotionality is related to a higher cognitive load, which, as the above mentioned studies suggest, may result in a higher frequency of hesitation disfluencies. Topics that involve higher degrees of emotionality could, thus, potentially contain more hesitation disfluencies. Even though certain studies about psychopathic language have commented on psychopaths' use of hesitations (Hancock, Woodworth and Porter 2011; Klaver, Lee and Hart 2006), these hesitations have never been examined in relation to cognitive load and topical contexts. This

paper, therefore, presents a case study of Ted Bundy focusing on the form as well as the potential origin of hesitation disfluencies in his speech in relation to the topical context in which they appear and aims to answer the following questions: what forms of hesitation disfluencies appear in which topical contexts? How does the topical context influence the frequency of hesitation disfluencies? What could these hesitation disfluencies imply in the different topical contexts, particularly with regard to cognitive load? In order to answer these questions, Bundy's hesitation disfluencies will first be classified into different categories and allocated to the different topical contexts and subsequently analysed quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

2   Theoretical background and previous research

2.1   Hesitation disfluencies

Speech disfluency, in contrast to fluent speech, is considered to be a "break in the smooth, meaningful flow of speech" (Mahesha and Vinod 2012: 23). It, thus, represents a disruption of speech production. According to Levelt's model, there are three stages of speech production from which these disruptions can originate: first, when the speaker formulates his message; second, when he organizes the linguistic materials, that is to say, when he plans syntactic structures, makes lexical choices and decides on how he wants to convey his message phonologically; third, when he mechanically produces the planned utterance (Levelt 1989, quoted in Zhang: 20). Speech disfluencies therefore also comprise errors that result from the articulation of the vocal apparatus. According to Lickley, however, these types of disfluencies do not belong to the sub-category of hesitation disfluencies, as they are defined as disfluencies where utterances are delayed due to a planning process (2015: 455). Hesitation disfluencies thus arise when the speaker encounters difficulties in either the first or the second stage of speech production.

Even though various studies have investigated the phenomenon of hesitation disfluency, the systems of classification vary. Several studies

Overall, the introduction is short and to the point. It outlines the data, the linguistic field, identifies the research gap, uses appropriate terminology, and ends with good research questions.

The theoretical background and previous research section is structured in a clear and coherent way. The sources are appropriate and relevant for the topic, and cover all of its aspects (e.g. hesitation disfluencies, language of psychopathy, Ted Bundy, etc.). They are critically compared and contrasted to each other.

quote's eight disfluency categories, which contain: "ah", sentence correction, sentence incompletion, repetition of words, stuttering, intruding incoherent sounds, slips of the tongue , and the omission of words or parts of words (1956, quoted in Maclay and Osgood 1959: 21 and Lickley 2015: 452). However, Mahl's categories comprise disfluencies in general, which is why they are narrowed down differently in each study into different categories of hesitation disfluencies in particular. For example, Maclay and Osgood define four types of hesitation disfluencies, namely, repeats, false starts, filled pauses, and unfilled pauses (1956: 24), whereas Lickley states that hesitations are represented by silent pauses, prolongations, filled pauses and repetitions (2015: 455). The classification of hesitation phenomena is, therefore, dependent on the data as well as on the objective of the study.

> This paragraph shows good critical engagement with the previous research by looking for several different systems of classification, and comparing them. It also shows this by pointing out where overall observations and results of different studies agree or disagree (i.e., spotting general patterns vs disputed areas).

The implications of hesitation disfluencies have been examined by several studies. For instance, Clark and Fox Tree conducted a study specifically on the hesitation markers *uh* and *uhm* and came to the conclusion that they cannot only be categorized as unintentional filled pauses, but also as words conveying a meaning (2002: 103) as they are "signals, not symptoms" (2002: 104). They found that they are used by speakers deliberately to imply, for example, that they are looking for a word or that they wish to continue speaking (2002: 73). However, Corley and Stewart contradict Clark and Fox Tree, stating that "there is little evidence that [the fillers *uh* and *uhm*] are intentionally produced" (2008: 589). They found that all hesitation phenomena are rather dependent on cognitive load; a higher cognitive load is often accompanied by a longer planning process which results in hesitation. This assumption is supported by the findings that hesitation disfluencies frequently appear before longer utterances, when the speaker is unfamiliar with the topic (2008: 590), or when they are uncertain about what to say next or how to say something (2008: 601). Furthermore, Castro and James investigated the impact of emotionality on the speech production of older and younger adults and found that, especially for adults over the age of 55, the frequency of hesitation phenomena increased when the participants described negative pictures in comparison to positive pictures (2014: 232). This result can be linked back to the variable of cognitive load, as "when confronted with negative information, the participants engaged in cognitively demanding emotion regulation strategies, leaving fewer available cognitive resources to perform the

language production task" (2014: 233). Similar results have been detected by Mahl, who worked on hesitation phenomena in clinical and other interviews; he found that the emotional as well as the motivational state of the speaker will influence the frequency of hesitation disfluencies (1956: quoted in Maclay and Osgood 1959: 43). Hence, even though hesitation disfluencies could imply that the speaker wants to actively convey a certain meaning, they are often likely to arise from cognitive processes.

2.2   The language of psychopaths

The linguistic observation of psychopaths has been of interest in previous research primarily because of subjects' lack of emotionality and because of their psychopathic deception strategies. Studies that have investigated these variables, however, also provide insightful findings in relation to hesitation disfluencies. For instance, Hancock, Woodworth and Porter compared crime narratives of psychopathic with non-psychopathic homicide offenders and found that the language of psychopathic offenders was significantly more disfluent (2011: 111); psychopathic offenders produced approximately 33% more disfluencies than their non-psychopathic counterparts (2011: 109). Hancock et al.'s explanation for this discrepancy lies in a lack of emotional capacity displayed by psychopaths: "The specific task of describing a powerful 'emotional' event to another person in a manner that appears appropriate may place increased cognitive load on the psychopath" (2011: 111). Similar results were noted by Klaver, Lee, and Hart, who concluded that for psychopaths not only response time and number of words, but also the frequency of hesitation disfluencies were increased (2006: 346).

The particular case of Ted Bundy's speech in his last interview before his execution has also been the subject of previous studies; Smithson, for example, investigated Bundy's manipulation strategies on the basis of Aristotle's concepts of ethos and pathos. Her findings were that Bundy was indeed manipulating his audience, for example, via the use of first person pronouns or the use of lexical items from specific semantic fields (2013: 12). In another study, extracts of the interview were closely analysed which led to the conclusion that his "use of terms reveals the real process involved, namely, the dissociation of guilt" (Rieber and Vetter 1994: 22). The strongest indications for this assumption are, according to the researchers, several formulations used by Bundy to victimize himself and blame society for his behaviour (1994: 21, 22).

3   Data and method

3.1   Ted Bundy's last interview

The dataset used in this study consists of Ted Bundy's last interview on January 24, 1989 before his execution on the following day. The approximately 30-minute-long interview is available on YouTube and was led by Reverent Dr. James Dobson, a well-known American psychologist and evangelical Christian author. Working with this data presents no ethical problems, as Bundy was certainly aware that the interview was recorded for publication purposes. As various transcripts already exist, I decided not to transcribe the interview once more . Instead, I used a transcript by Tiffany Princep, who was the only transcriber who made the decision to include various hesitations and interruptions in her transcription; she transcribed filled pauses with *uh* or *uhm*, indicated silent pauses with an ellipsis, and included the various repetitions. In a short preface to the transcript, she draws attention to her observation of hesitation disfluencies appearing more frequently when Bundy is talking about his murders or alleged remorse (Princep: 1).

      In order to investigate the hesitations empirically, I first compared Princep's transcript with the video footage of the interview to verify the accuracy of the transcript, especially with regard to hesitation disfluencies. Her transcript, in spite of indicating certain silent and filled pauses as well as repetitions, would not have been sufficient for the investigation of different kinds of hesitations in Bundy's speech, which is why I used it as a starting point and added the numerous hesitation disfluencies myself. In addition, I corrected minor mistakes such as inaccurately transcribed words or omitted phrases.

Good critical engagement with the source.

3.2   Classification of hesitation disfluencies

As mentioned in section 2.1, there is more than one way to classify hesitation disfluencies; the choice of the classification thus depends on the focus and on the goal of the study. After having listened to the interview, I decided to work with Lickley's categories, namely, silent pauses, filled

This section demonstrates an ability to work critically and effectively with previous research by identifying the most suitable categorization, and creating subcategories as necessary to make the categories relevant to the topic, while remaining comparable to previous research.

pauses, repetitions, and prolongations . In order to investigate the variable of hesitation disfluencies more precisely, I chose to add the following sub-categories to the categories of filled pauses and repetitions: 1) *uh,* 2) *uhm*, and 3) neither *uh* nor *uhm,* respectively, 1) syllable repetition, 2) repetition of one word, and 3) repetition of more than one word to the category of repetitions. As I did not detect any cases of prolongation, the hesitations that were detected in the interview were annotated directly in the transcript with abbreviations of the following categories:

1. Silent pauses = S
2. Filled pauses
    2.1. *Uh* = F1
    2.2. *Uhm* = F2
    2.3. Neither *uh* nor *uhm* = F3
3. *Repetitions*
    3.1. Syllable repetition = R1
    3.2. Repetition of one word = R2
    3.3. Repetition of more than one word = R3

Whereas filled pauses as well as repetitions were relatively clearly distinguishable, the annotation of silent pauses proved to be more difficult, as there is no clear acoustic definition to distinguish between silent fluent and disfluent pauses (Lickley 2015: 457). Following the example of other researchers who encountered the same problem, I thus relied on my own perceptual judgment when annotating silent pauses (Lickley 2015: 457).

This section shows the ability to discuss difficulties encountered/issues with the annotation scheme, and to provide a solution based on previous research.

After annotating hesitation disfluencies in the transcript, I copied the document into AntConc, a programme that allowed me to extract the annotated hesitation disfluencies with the search query "S|F|R". The resulting KWIC concordance lines were then copied into an Excel worksheet for further annotation.

3.3   Classification of different topical contexts

In order to investigate the form and frequency of hesitation markers in different topical contexts, which refers to the topic of the discussion, these different contexts had to be identified so that each hesitation could

This section shows the ability to deal with previous studies' methods critically, as well as to make coherent and relevant decisions for the method to examine this topic accordingly (i.e. by creating new categories for topical contexts)

be assigned to one context category. The problems with this strategy were that, in the first place, I could not find any other studies that investigated a linguistic variable in different topical contexts where the outset already existing data, as this interview of Ted Bundy, where utterances had to be classified with a topical context. In the second place, the small dataset rendered the topical contexts automatically very specific, which is why it is rather improbable that the categories for topical contexts used in other similar studies could have been used here as well. That is why after reading the transcript multiple times, I identified four main topics discussed in the interview: 1) Bundy's planned execution, 2) his childhood, 3) pornography, and 4) murder, with pornography and murder being the two main topics of the interview.

The last step was the coding of the already extracted hesitation disfluencies in the Excel worksheet. I considered each hesitation in its original context and then annotated it with the appropriate topical context, which allowed me to calculate the frequencies for all types of hesitation disfluencies, also in relation to the different topical contexts.

4   Results and discussion

4.1   Quantitative analysis

The first part of the quantitative analysis consists of the evaluation of what types of hesitation disfluencies appear most often in order to elaborate on Bundy's "preference" for hesitation phenomena, which "may be considered an aspect of individual style in speaking" (Macclay and Osgood, 1959: 38), and is, therefore, different for every speaker. Further, the results of this first part allow one to compare the frequency of the different forms of hesitation disfluencies in different topical contexts. Table 1 presents these results in absolute numbers as well as in percentages:

Table 1: Absolute numbers and percentages of hesitation disfluencies in different topical contexts

	Total Hesitations	F1	F2	F3	R1	R2	R3	S
Execution	22 100%	3 13.36%	2 9.09%	3 13.36%	0 0%	4 18.18%	2 9.09%	8 36.36%
Childhood	28	8	0	5	1	6	3	5

	100%	28.57%	0%	17.85%	3.57%	21.43%	10.71%	17.86%
Pornography	64	6	4	7	0	21	8	18
	100%	9.38%	6.25%	10.94%	0%	32.81%	12.5%	28.13%
Murders	129	20	8	18	2	29	12	40
	100%	15.50%	6.20%	1395%	1.55%	22.48%	9.30%	31.01%
Total	**243**	**37**	**14**	**33**	**3**	**60**	**25**	**71**
	100%	15.22%	5.76%	13.58%	1.23%	24.69%	10.28%	29.22%
	243	**84**			**88**			**71**
	100%	34.57%			36.21%			29.22%

These results indicate that, in general, Bundy displayed no clear predisposition in his use of hesitation disfluencies, as the percentages of filled pauses (34.57%), repetitions (36.21%), and silent pauses (29.22%) show that no hesitation type was used considerably more or less than the others. A predisposition can be observed, however, when one considers the sub-categories of filled pauses and repetitions: the filled pause F2 (*uhm*) was used the least in comparison to F1 (*uh*) and F3 (neither *uh* nor *uhm*), , whereas for repetitions, the syllable-repetition R1 almost never appeared , yet, the one-word-repetition R2 predominates in this category. Additional predispositions or preferences of hesitation forms become apparent when one considers them in the different topical contexts. While in the topical context of his murders and his upcoming death the distribution of the three major hesitation types is relatively balanced, he displays clear predispositions in the category of pornography: with a percentage of 32.81%, the one-word-repetition R2 was used most often, and combined with the other types of repetitions this hesitation type is even more clearly the most frequent in that context. The distribution of hesitation types in the context of childhood seems similarly unequal with more than 45% of filled pauses when the three types are combined. However, this inequality could be due to the small number of hesitations in this context; with a total of 28 hesitations, the absolute numbers of filled pauses and repetitions only differ slightly. What can be said, however, is that in this context silent pauses are extraordinarily rare. These results suggest that

This paragraph shows an ability to elaborate on claims, backing up the interpretation with the results in the table in a clear and coherent way.

Another way of structuring this paragraph would be to separate the results from the interpretation, starting with a description of the results as illustrated in the table, before moving on to the interpretation.

overall all forms of hesitation disfluencies were used roughly equally and depended only slightly on the topical contexts they appeared in.

In a second part, I want to analyse the frequency of hesitation disfluencies in the different topical contexts in order to investigate to what extent Bundy's hesitations varied depending on the topic he was talking about. The frequencies of hesitation were calculated with regard to the number of hesitations per 100 words (Table 2).

Table 2: Hesitation frequencies per 100 words in different contexts

	Total	Execution	Childhood	Pornography	Murder
Number of words	3364	259	372	1028	1606
Number of hesitations	243	22	28	64	129
Frequency (Hesitations/100 words)	**7.22**	**8.49**	**7.53**	**6.23**	**8.03**

In total, 7.22 out of 100 words were affected by hesitation disfluencies, which is only slightly higher than Fox Tree's estimate of an average of 6 hesitations per 100 words (1995: 709). Hence, in Bundy's specific case, the findings do not reflect the results of previous research that showed r that hesitation disfluencies are significantly more frequent in psychopathic speech . The frequencies for each context range from 6.23 to 8.49 hesitations per 100 words; while in the topic context of pornography the speech was affected by the smallest number of hesitation disfluencies, the numbers increased as Bundy talked about his childhood or murders and, finally, were the highest when the conversation topic was his impending execution. In an attempt to explain these discrepancies, one can consider the different cognitive load that is potentially linked to each of these topics. If the frequency of hesitation disfluencies is correlated to the amount of cognitive load as suggested by several studies mentioned in paragraph 2.1, these results indicate that the topic of his execution was the most cognitively demanding, whereas the topic of pornography came with the smallest cognitive load of these four topics. These assumptions seem to be accountable: in spite of being a serial killer, the topic of his own death as a result of his imminent execution might be a topic he was

This shows an ability to develop a clear argument that also has a coherent order.

not accustomed to talking about, and, therefore, required higher cognitive activity which resulted in more hesitations. Furthermore, this topic was most probably accompanied by the highest emotionality and uncertainty, as it affected him personally and was the only event that still lay in the future. These two factors are, according to previous research, likely to increase the frequency of hesitation disfluencies. The second assumption, namely, that the topic context of pornography represents the topic which was the least cognitively demanding, is also explicable: the interviewer Dr. Dobson revealed during the interview that Bundy explicitly contacted him for this interview to convey his message, which is that "hardcore pornography, and the door to it, softcore pornography, is doing untold damage to other people and causing other women to be abused and killed the way you did" (Princep: 7). It is, hence, highly probable that Bundy's statements concerning pornography were prepared and thought over carefully beforehand; consequently, the cognitive load might have been reduced for this topic, as the messages were already planned, which results in less planning time during the actual interview and subsequently a lower frequency of hesitation disfluencies. Hence, the frequencies of Bundy's hesitations in different topical contexts can potentially be explained in relation to cognitive load.

4.2 Qualitative analysis

In a qualitative analysis, I will evaluate certain utterances in a more detailed way in order to investigate their implications, their potential origin and whether they could be linked to the topical context. All of the examples stem from my revised transcript.

The highest frequency of hesitations appeared in the context of his execution. Examples 1 and 2 support the assumption that, in this context, hesitations may occur because of the difficulty of explaining one's emotions and thoughts:

(1) I won't kid you to say it's **…** something that I **…** feel that I'm in control of or something that I have come to terms with, 'cause I haven't.

(2) I can't say that, **uh**, being in the Valley of the Shadow of Death **is** – **is** something that I've become all that accustomed to, **and that I'm – and that I'm** strong and, **uh**, nothing's bothering me. **Uhm**, listen, it's no fun.

Hesitations in the form of two successive silent pauses appear in example 1 at points where they are most likely bound to formulation issues; appearing at the beginning of the sentence, the pauses as well as the unspecified noun *something* between the hesitations buy time to formulate the message of the sentence. Similarly, example 2 is affected by hesitations at the beginning of each phrase, namely, two cases of filled pause *uh* after the conjunctions *that* and *and* as well as a repetition around the conjunction *that*, and another filled pause *Uhm* at the beginning of the last sentence. These indicate, as in example 1, a planning process resulting in hesitation. Emotionality might play an important role in both cases, since Bundy needs to formulate how he is feeling with regard to his execution; potential expressions that describe how he is feeling are underlined, which illustrates that hesitations are often closely followed by expressions of his inner state.

In contrast, the topical context of pornography generally relates less to his own feelings than to alleged facts. Example 3 is Bundy's answer to Dr. Dobson's question about "the message he wants to come across", and displays no disfluencies, in spite of the lexical difficulty that is potentially involved; this perfect fluency might be an indication that he, in fact, already

knew what message he wanted to convey, which is why the planning process took less time, resulting in no hesitations.

(3) I've met a lot of men who were motivated to commit violence, just like me. And without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography, without question, without exception, deeply influenced and consumed by an addiction to pornography.

Finally, example 4 provides insights into Bundy's speech when he is talking about his murders, more specifically, his alleged remorse about these murders:

(4) I can only hope ... that those who I have harmed ... those to whom I have caused so much grief ... even if they don't believe ... my ... expression of ... sorrow, and remorse will believe what I'm saying now.

The conspicuously high number of hesitations, most of all silent pauses, could be seen as an indication of the level of cognitive difficulty that accompanies this topic. However, as previous studies have detected other manipulation strategies in Bundy's speech of this exact interview, it is possible that these apparent accidental hesitations were, in fact, part of this strategy, and rather used as a means to convince the listener of a message, namely, that the killer does feel remorse and is thus having difficulty talking about it. Yet, this remains an assumption that would require deeper investigation in order to be verified. Nonetheless, the examples demonstrate that the occurrence of hesitation disfluencies in speech cannot in each case undoubtedly be attributed to difficulties in the stages of speech production and cognitive load, but could also be considered as a strategy that is actively used to convey or manipulate a message.

5   Conclusion

The present paper aimed to investigate the phenomenon of hesitation disfluencies in the speech of Ted Bundy during his last interview. A quantitative analysis showed that the different forms of hesitation disfluencies are distributed equally over the whole interview. However, certain predispositions and preferences can be observed in relation to the sub-categories of the hesitations and the topical context in which they appear. Furthermore, the frequency of hesitation phenomena has proven to be to some extent dependent on the topical context, as contexts that potentially implicated a higher cognitive load exhibited a higher frequency of hesitations. The implications of certain examples of hesitation disfluencies have been analysed more closely in a qualitative analysis, which, again, revealed a connection between cognitive load and hesitations. Especially in the case of psychopathic speech, however, hesitation

disfluencies may also be an actively used strategy in order to manipulate the message received by the listeners.

In spite of results that seem explicable, the limitations of this study should not be neglected: first, hesitation disfluencies were identified and classified based on my own auditory perception, which potentially led to mistakes and might have caused a distortion of the results. Further, the dataset with which I worked was very specific, which is why final conclusions can only be drawn for this exact case, and further generalization of how hesitation disfluencies appear in the speech of Ted Bundy or psychopaths in general would require a bigger sample size as well as a more reliable method to classify the different forms of hesitation disfluencies. A closer linguistic investigation of the implicit meaning of hesitations and their verbal and non-verbal cues particularly in relation to psychopathic language could be of use not only for police interrogations, but also in the field of forensic psychology.

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The titles of these papers and the journals show that these are good and relevant sources.
For the scope and level of this paper, these are a sufficient number of references. Note: If you are writing a term paper for a BA seminar or a BA thesis in Linguistics, more references would be needed.
Minor criticism: 2-3 of the sources are because of indirect citations; a few are only referred to once; and they are not picked up again in the analysis/discussion or conclusion (with the exception of Maclay and Osgood 1959). One or two references are not formatted consistently.
A positive aspect: apart from 3-4 references, all are from the last 10-15 years.

"Ted Bundy Biography". 2014. A&E Television Networks. Available at <u>Ted Bundy Victims, Family & Death - Biography</u> (accessed January 31, 2021).

Zhang, Hong. 2020. "The Distribution of Disfluencies in Spontaneous Speech: Empirical Observations and Theoretical Implications". *Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations.* <u>https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/3959</u>.

Overall, this research paper shows excellent skills. It is well structured, in a coherent and clear way, and includes information and makes decisions that are relevant to the topic. It demonstrates an ability to develop clear arguments and to elaborate claims. It also deals with both primary and secondary sources critically, and the selection of previous research and theoretical framework is relevant and sufficient (for an IntroLing paper).

There are minor areas of improvement in this paper. We recommend double checking with the Manual for Papers in English Linguistics for anything related to the form (and also content).

4. Literature papers

The Literature section trains students to critically engage with a range of primary texts, with the goal of discussing a central, arguable claim. While the number and length of paragraphs may vary, the fundamental requirements of the essay remain the same: the essay should present an original analysis of the primary text(s), consider additional secondary sources on the topic, and discuss the relevance of the issue in wider cultural and literary contexts. In a successful essay, students employ formal concepts from the Textual Analysis (TA) module and consult additional critical theory to develop their argument and situate their essay in the broader academic discourse. The essay is structured around one central claim (explicitly presented as a thesis statement in the introductory section of the essay), which is developed in a logical progression of paragraphs.

The different parts of a term paper have different functions. The **introduction** should explain what the topic is, why it is important and how it will be approached. It is not necessary to repeat the title of the paper; it is, however, necessary to explain what the idea or the problem behind it is. The introduction should present the terms, concepts and primary texts that are indicated by the title of the paper: Which critical concepts will be used and how are they defined? It should also outline how the writer aims to proceed. In short, the introduction should not be a mere list of what is to come, but should state why specific authors or literary texts have been chosen, how the steps of the argument follow each other, and what the writer aims to show thereby.

The analytical section of the essay must move beyond a summary or description of the primary sources. Thus, the purpose of **the main body** of a term paper is to find persuasive answers to the research questions by *analysing* a literary text. The main body paragraphs should introduce the key point to be discussed, quoting a selected passage from the literary text that illustrates the point, then commenting on and analysing that passage. It should also draw on scholarly criticism and use it to support its own point. It should avoid merely following one single critical source, but reference or compare several sources. The number of paragraphs is dictated by the steps in the argument, not the other way round. The paragraph should also be cohesive and link ideas well, by using transition markers such as *therefore, for example, in contrast,* etc.

Finally, **the conclusion** of the essay should tie together the individual arguments. It should not explain the topic again or repeat the argument; instead, it should summarise how the individual findings add up to a result that is an answer to the thesis statement and the question(s) raised in the introduction. Depending on the length of the paper, it may also critically reflect on the essay, its limits and its possible development.

- TA essays (autumn semester 1,500 words + spring semester 2,500 words, ± 10%)
- BA essays (4,000 words, ± 10%)
- BA thesis (10,000 words, ± 10%)

Please also consult the Literature Guide for further details. The document is available at www.es.uzh.ch/downloads ("English Literature").

A sample paper for the module "English Literature: Textual Analysis" is provided below. Remember that the feedback given is not exhaustive.

[Name of instructor]

English Literature: Textual Analysis

Of Trolls and Heroes: Subverting Tropes as an Illustration of Tradition and Progress in Terry Pratchett's "Troll Bridge"

[Student's Name]

[Student ID]

[Student's email address]

[Month and year]

What characterizes the fantasy literary genre is its tendency to incorporate societal questions into its narrative. Whether the text offers a definite answer or solely illustrates these issues in a different light by situating them in a world distinct from ours does not matter – the interpretation value for the reader stays the same (Fabrizi 1). Terry Pratchett's short story "Troll Bridge" published in 1992 examines the issue of tradition and progress and the inherent conflict between these two concepts. Pratchett is known for handling the fantasy genre differently by adapting, criticising and ridiculing fantasy conventions to add a notion of parody and satire to his stories (Haberkorn "Seriously Relevant", 146). Fantasy conventions, namely recurring ideas, phrases and themes across different texts of the genre, are understood here as tropes. Thus, whenever a character's description and action conform to their trope, they stay within fantasy conventions and represent it's the genre's traditional values. Hence, in "Troll Bridge", progress and tradition are not only represented through the behaviour of the two main characters Cohen and Mica, but also in how the conventional tropes of barbarian and troll have, or have not, been subverted.

Mica can be seen to represent tradition because he is a firm believer in the mythology of his own trope, the troll, and embodies that in accordance with Nordic folklore both in terms of his physical appearance and his attitude. According to Scandinavian mythology, trolls turn to stone when they are exposed to sunlight (Eastman 62). Mica's physicality then, "[his] huge, stony chest" (Pratchett 228), adheres to this image. Additionally, Nordic folklore states that ogre-trolls are stupid and therefore easy to trick (Eastman 61), which also seems to be the case for Mica when Cohen uses a simple ruse and Mica falls for it in the following passage: "The troll blinked. Even the cold and cloudy winter skies seriously reduced the conductivity of a troll's silicon brain and it had taken it this long to realize that the saddle was unoccupied. It blinked again, because it could suddenly feel a knife point resting on the back of its neck" (Pratchett 227). Moreover, a troll is an ugly, hungry being who lurks under a bridge (Eastman 62). In the narrative, Mica tries to hold onto what he calls "bridge business" even though it is not a profitable profession anymore, which for him seems to be what essentially defines a troll as he states "'Beryl's always sayin' we

ought to move out, get something better, but I tell her, this bridge has been in our family for generations, there's always been a troll under Death Bridge. It's tradition'" (Pratchett 229). A troll is also supposed to possess treasure and be malicious (Eastman 62). Mica evidently tries to have a threatening impression as he greets Cohen and other passengers trying to cross his bridge like this: "A grey shape vaulted over the parapet and landed splayfooted in front of the horse. It waves a club. 'All right,' it growled" (Pratchett 227). Furthermore, Mica, just as conservative-minded people are inclined to do, actively resists change by illustrating the "goodness" of a troll's traditional principles measured by the antiquity of these values (Willmoore and Carey 409). "'I was brought up a troll under a bridge. I want young Scree to be a troll under a bridge after I'm gone. What's wrong with that? You've got to have trolls under bridges" (Pratchett 233). Mica then follows the narrative rules of his trope and therefore can be seen as a potential embodiment of tradition.

On the other hand, Cohen might be understood as a representation of progress, which is reflected in his unusual display of the fantasy hero. Unlike Mica, Cohen is characterized through the deployment of a subverted trope, namely a parody of the intertextual image of Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian*. Conan is a traditional warrior hero and is portrayed as a creature of courage, brutality and rage. Conan's bodily image clearly is of prominence in his characterization (Haberkorn "Cultural Palimpsests", 234). Thus, Cohen's age is contradicting said image, because Pratchett subverts the trope of the typical "Conan-esque" barbarian fighter by thinking it through logically: If a warrior wins every fight, they will eventually grow old (Haberkorn "Cultural Palimpsests", 328). Although Cohen does manage to trick Mica, his physical problems due to his age are clearly illustrated in the story. "[Cohen] winced, and leaned against a tree. 'I swear this bloody sword gets heavier every day'" (Pratchett 224). Cohen then quite literally outgrows his own trope and is forced to adapt his thinking to this circumstance as well. While Conan may have little tendency to think intelligently (Haberkorn "Cultural Palimpsests", 234) and is not stealthy (Bertetti 20), Cohen is forced to trick Mica in order to gain an advantage of the situation, which implies that Cohen is smart and can be

The final sentence restates the argument of the paragraph without repeating it word for word.

The paragraph as a whole presents various textual instances that support the argument of the paragraph. These close readings go beyond a summary of the plot.

This paragraph makes good use of secondary sources, using them to provide context and background. The writer uses Haberkorn's insights to illustrate a similar argument for a different text.

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sneaky when he needs to be. Additionally, Cohen turns his back on what is expected from him by not killing Mica. Although Cohen might think like a barbarian, he acts differently because he clearly is able to assess the moral repercussions of his actions, which is demonstrated when he says "'The thing is,' said Cohen when they were alone, 'I wasn't actually intending to kill you'" (Pratchett 231) and thus drops his initial plan of killing the troll, further implying that he does not have a tendency to unreasonable brutality as Conan does (Haberkorn "Cultural Palimpsests", 234).

Although it is clear then that Cohen and Mica can be seen to represent tradition and progress, they do not embody these concepts in a fixed manner, but rather exemplify their gradual and changeable nature. According to Willmoore and Carey, standards of practices and beliefs, over a certain period of time, come to be seen as established into societal norms. This heritage, however, is always subjected to conscious or unconscious change which then again will establish new values (407-8). This means that progress initially has its roots in tradition and the fact that Cohen's character is built upon a trope reflects this notion as well: Cohen is based on Conan, a traditional concept, and evolved from there into the character he is in the story. This process of evolution is illustrated by the story as well, in which it becomes clear Cohen used to behave like Conan. "'When I was just starting out in the barbarian hero business,' said Cohen, 'every bridge had a troll under it. (…) I wonder what happened to 'em all?' – 'You,' said the horse" (Pratchett 235f.). Therefore, Cohen's entire character demonstrates that without any convention as a basis, there could not be subversion, just as without tradition, progress is not the one to advocate for change.

Mica on the other hand, demonstrates how some conservatists are forced to accept progress because they would be "pushed to the edge" (Pratchett 234) otherwise, but still try to defend their antique values. In Mica's case, preserving these traditional values comes at the cost of breaking and unwillingly subverting his own trope, as he says "'To tell you the truth, I'm having to work three days a week down at my brother-in-law's lumber mill just to make ends meet" (Pratchett 232). In Pratchett's stories it is often the case that characters who ultimately ignore the narrative rules and therefore the conventions they are supposed to adhere to, win the day

(Scholz 239). Although this might be true for Mica because he manages to earn enough money by doing different work than bridge business and therefore support his family, he is ashamed of breaking his trope and does not view it as fitting. "'One of 'em's a lumber merchant down in Sour Water (…). Call that a proper job for a troll?'" (Pratchett 232). He does not carry the day then by breaking his narrative rules, because he does so unwillingly, which illustrates the forceful push of progress and its tendency to leave members of society behind that do not want to come along with it.

In conclusion, an attentive reading of "Troll Bridge" with a focus on how tropes are and are not subverted demonstrates how its narrative is not only supported by its content but also by its grounded characterization in its display of literary convention and tradition. A trope then, whether it is subverted or not, can connect a character's values to their inherent construction and thus ground their principles outside of the narrative on an extra-diegetic level. However, one might pose the question then, based on the conviction that all stories are inherently built upon conventions of other stories, if not all narratives are therefore grounded in their construction on an extra-diegetic level already, and thus if any debate about originality in writing is not completely redundant. This would mean that even if the narrative were to employ themes, symbols or principles that would not traditionally count as a trope, it could never be seen as original since every text consequently would be built upon the same source. Not even subversion would be able to add anything new, since subversion is only possible if one takes convention as a source material.

The conclusion briefly summarises the main argument (again, in different words) and then broadens the argument. Crucially, this broadening is still within the realm of literature and connected to thesis of the essay rather than being a collection of vague generalities.

[1516 words]

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This essay presents a clear argument about a primary text; the claim is set up clearly and precisely in the thesis and then developed throughout the essay. The connection between each step in the argument and the thesis is always evident without being repetitive. The secondary sources are incorporated well, supporting the argument without overwhelming the writer's voice. This is aided by a clear structure and a mostly precise writing style. There are, however, moments in which the language becomes convoluted. Furthermore, the formatting can be improved by using the conventions of the Literature Guide.

5. Final remarks

It should be apparent from the sample essays above that the three sections of the English Department require students to complete assignments that differ in length, structure and overall methodology. To an extent, this reflects the different approaches to research and academic writing within the various disciplines. Linguistics papers have separate labelled sections such as "Introduction", "Previous research and theoretical background", "Methodology", "Results", "Conclusion", etc, each building on the other. The overall approach or "paradigm" may be qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both. Literature papers avoid using headings, reflect more the overall "essay" format, and, while quantitative approaches to studying literature are not unheard of, are primarily "qualitative" and interpretative in their approach to the primary text. LSC essays again lack headings, are fairly rigid in their structure and focus throughout in developing one side of the issue involved, while other types of assignments in both linguistics and literature may offer more room for discussing opposing views or possible alternative interpretations. Thus, it is a key skill for students of English (and indeed of any subject) to be aware of the conventions, approaches and structures that are required by particular disciplines within that broad field of inquiry and by particular assignment types.

Nevertheless, at the heart of all academic writing assignments (articles, papers, PhD theses, monographs, etc.) lie a set of universal competences. Academic writing requires writers to implement key transferable skills such as developing a coherent argument; leading the reader into the topic; presenting evidence for claims and illustration of ideas; explaining the relevance of examples; ensuring clarity in development and style; and being able to structure ideas into a cohesive whole (all while exhibiting a good command of academic English). All good writing manuals will encourage (and help) writers to develop these competences (see the recommended reading below).

Key points to remember:

- Develop an awareness of which skills, structures and approaches are specific to the discipline and/or assignment in question.
- If in doubt about the approach required for an academic writing task, ask your instructor. Don't assume that one type of assignment (e.g. an LSC essay) "fits all sizes", and that all the skills required there are suitable for other assignments. That is most likely not the case.
- Nevertheless, develop an awareness and control of key transferable academic writing skills.
- Reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer; build on the former, work on the latter.
- Implementing academic writing skills is an ongoing process. Some skills may take longer to master than others, and thus it is important to see the cycle of writing assignments, receiving feedback on them and improving as part of a long-term ongoing process of developing as an academic writer.
- Make use of writing manuals and/or workshops at whatever level to gain new input on academic writing and to practice key skills.

Recommended further reading

General undergraduate-level guides to academic writing:

Aczel, Richard. *How to Write an Essay.* Klett, 2014.

Bailey, Stephen. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students.* 5th edition. Routledge, 2017.

Creme, Phyllis. *Writing at University: A Guide for Students.* 3rd edition. Oxford UP, 2008.

Greetham, Bryan. *How to Write Better Essays.* 4th edition. Palgrave, 2018.

Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically.* 5th edition. Thomas Wadsworth, 2009.

Graduate-level general guides on academic writing:

Belcher, Wendy. *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks. A Guide to Academic Publishing Success.* 2nd edition. Sage, 2019.

Craswell, Gail, and Megan Poore. *Writing for Academic Success: A Postgraduate Guide.* 2nd edition. Sage, 2012.

Goodson, Patricia. *Becoming an Academic Writer. 50 Exercises for Paced, Productive, and Powerful Writing.* Sage, 2013.

Murray, Rowena. *Writing for Academic Journals.* 4th edition. Open University Press, 2019.

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Students should also consult the separate writing manuals for Literature and Linguistics papers.

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