

Assignment 1 - The Proposal

Linguistics 381 - Written English for Non-Native Speakers

Spring, 2001

This quarter you will be working on a project which should be relevant to your field of specialization. If you can interweave this writing effort with work you are already doing, that would be great. If you prepare a project which will eventually become a publication for you, that would be ideal. In other words, I want you to choose a subject for your project such that the final product will be beneficial to your continuing studies. Please keep this in mind as you begin working on the project.

The first step, then, is to choose a topic. I can offer no guidance here except to recommend that you choose something relevant to your field of specialization. But, I think I've made that point abundantly clear...

The second step is probably more important. You need to choose the kind of work you wish to produce: will this be a research article? a squib? a review article? a critique? the text of a paper to be presented at a conference? a detailed research proposal? other? As far as I'm concerned anything is okay as long as it is something substantial and consists primarily of prose (i.e., an abstract alone, or an outline of a presentation are not sufficient).

So, your task is to prepare a written proposal for your project. At a minimum your proposal should answer the following questions.

- What is the central question which you will try to answer?
- What kind of project are you proposing?
- What, roughly, will be the structure and layout of the project?
- What will you need to do to complete this project before the end of the quarter?

Depending on the nature of your project it may be necessary to answer other questions.

As you consider what you would like to do for your project, I urge you to choose something *manageable* within the given time frame (ten weeks). A dissertation, or a major research paper for a tier-1 journal is not a manageable project. You should probably consider something that in the end will be roughly 3,000 words. If this project is a paper which you will hand in for another course you are taking now, that is fine with me. In fact, I think it is preferable!

You may wish to look at the following in *WACH5* to help you.

- Chapter 2 "Preparing to Write" pp. 7-18 (especially, Sections 2.1 and 2.2)
- Chapter 4 "Exploratory Drafting and Thesis Statements" pp. 57-63 (especially, Section 4.3)
- Section 36.2 "Understanding a Research Assignment, Defining a Topic, and Posing a Research Question", pp. 519-523.
- Section 42.4 "Asking the Question that Fits Your Discipline", pp. 655-659

Write up your proposal in prose of reasonable length to answer these questions (hint: 100 words is too short, 1000 words is too long) and submit it to me in ASCII text format via the "Digital Dropbox" on the course web site.