

Linguistics 610 Fall 2006

Squib assignment

Due Thursday, December 7 [Happy birthday to Noam!]

[One page 'proposal' due Tuesday, November 21. This should lay out the key data, and briefly, but clearly, state what the issue is.]

In no more than 10 pages [2 spacing, 1 inch margins] discuss some data or phenomenon (from English or any other language) in terms of theoretical considerations discussed or alluded to in class. I want to see something 'new', rather than just a summary (no matter how brilliant) of something we have discussed in class, or that you have read.

You might show how your phenomenon is easily accommodated by some rule or principle you have seen. Or, on the other hand, you might show exactly how your phenomenon creates problems for some proposal. In the latter case, you may, if you like, propose some new rule, principle, etc. that solves the problem but this is not required.

Don't confuse this task with writing a thesis, or even a term paper. But the problem must be clearly articulated, and difficulties with potential solutions presented. Whatever you do, be explicit about the paradigms of data, rules, constraints, derivations, etc. that are involved. I strongly advise you to keep the topic small. Once you have picked a potential topic, check with me if you like.

DO NOT PANIC I will provide comments on your squib, and a grade, but a low grade will count extremely little towards your course grade. You must turn in a squib, and, obviously, try to do a good job. But don't worry about trying to make it publishable. I just want you to start thinking about how to collect data, find generalizations (or counter-examples), and relate what you find to theoretical claims you are familiar with. Keep in mind that the emphasis in this assignment is discussion/analysis of data, rather than scholarship. I don't expect (or recommend) that you read and report on all (or even any) of the potentially relevant literature on your topic.

{{The term 'squib' comes from a section of the journal Linguistic Inquiry that presents short papers that (often) raise problems but without necessarily solving them.}}