Citation and reference in linguistics

Overview

Citations and references provide the source for some idea, analysis or quotation within a document or presentation. Citations and references provide the answer to the question "what is the basis for that information?"

Citations and references are a good thing. The inclusion of citations within a document does not mean you have no original ideas. Rather, it shows that you've been reading and are probably not reinventing the wheel. Rarely if ever have I seen a document with too many citations. Here is some additional information on this point from "Academic Honesty: Cheating and Plagiarism" (http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm):

> You may think that citing another author's work will lower your grade. In some unusual cases this may be true, if your instructor has indicated that you must write your paper without reading additional material. But in fact, as you progress in your studies, you will be expected to show that you are familiar with important work in your field and can use this work to further your own thinking. Your professors write this kind of paper all the time. The key to avoiding plagiarism is that you show clearly where your own thinking ends and someone else's begins.

In introductory courses, students should not worry excessively about having original ideas. Often ideas come from reading the literature.

A citation is a shorthand way of referring to the source of information. Citations go in the document, and are accompanied by a bibliography or reference list, usually at the end of the document, which provides enough information about each item cited that a reader who wants to find out more about that source can locate it.

Current practice in linguistics

Each academic discipline has its own citation and reference conventions, and there is variation even within disciplines.

Citation

Within linguistics the current[1] practice is to provide an "author date" citation within the text. A citation is part of some sentence. Sometimes parentheses are placed around the entire citation, around just the date or not used at all, depending on the structure of the sentence.

> *author date:* "...see McDonough and Willie 2000 for an experiment involving Navajo word formation."
> *author (date):* "An early generative treatment is to be found in Kuroda (1967)."

[1]In older linguistic writing, there were no citations. References were simply provided in footnotes (see e.g. Lenneberg and Roberts 1956).

(author date): "The description of modern Athabaskan (McDonough 2000)...leads to postulating a bipartite structure for the verb..."

The citation contains the author's last name(s) only as well as the date of publication or dissemination.[2] There is no comma within the citation to separate the last name(s) and the year.

If a work cited has multiple authors, the "first author" listed in the citation is the person who is considered to have done the most work or made the greatest intellectual contribution to the work. There may be a second, third, fourth, etc. author, but typically if there are more than two authors then they are abbreviated "et al." (from Latin *et alia* 'and others'):

"Tense voice is...probably best known as one of the contrasting voice qualities for Korean obstruents (Han and Veitzman 1970, Hardcastle 1973, Kagaya 1974, Cho, Jun, and Ladefoged 2002)..."

or

"...(Han and Weitzman 1970, Hardcastle 1973, Kagaya 1974, Cho et al. 2002)..."

If there are multiple citations for the same point, they are generally listed chronologically:

Various descriptions of the verb prefix phonology and morphology in Athabaskan languages are available (e.g. Li 1946 for Dene Sųłiné (Chipewyan), Kari 1976 for Navajo, Hargus 1988 for McLeod Lake Tsek'ene (Sekani), Holton 2000 for Tanacross)…

Citations should be placed near the beginning of the source of information, in the first sentence for information that spans several sentences or an entire paragraph. In the examples given so far, some citations occur at the end of a sentence and some at the beginning---either place within the sentence is fine.

It is not common practice in linguistics to refer to a previous citation with *op. cit.* or *loc. cit.*,[3] as in some fields. Instead, in linguistics, the author date citation is repeated as needed.

When a citation is provided for a quotation, page numbers should <u>always</u> be included with a direct quotation, following a colon:

According to Leer 2010:99, 'the bulk of regular sound correspondences have been identified' (between Athabaskan, Eyak and Tlingit).

Page numbers may also be included with other citations, even if there is no direct quote:

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[2]The only time anything other than a last name would appear in a citation would be when there are two citations in the same year from authors with the same last name. In that case, "K. Rice 2000" and "S. Rice 2000" would be appropriate disambiguating citations.

[3]*op. cit.* from Latin *opere citato* 'in the work cited'; *loc. cit.* from Latin *loco citato* 'in the place cited'

> Ket has a phonemic opposition of four tones,...with the description of the phonetic properties of each tone to the right (Vajda 2004:12).

It is a bad idea for at least two reasons to cite items that you haven't personally looked at. (1) By citing something you haven't personally looked at, you are essentially plagiarizing someone else's comments on whatever you are citing. (2) You may perpetuate something wrong about the reference, such as wrong page numbers, or misrepresentation of some idea or resource. Also, in general scholars should have independent minds and should not accept a secondary source's interpretation of some other information. If something looks promising, go and check it out yourself.

Bibliography/reference lists

In linguistics, like other modern academic disciplines, the list of references is placed at the end of a document (usually after any appendices). The list is alphabetized by the first author's last name, and then chronologically organized (oldest first).

Very importantly, the reference list contains <u>all and only</u> works cited in the document. It is not a list of everything you consulted in the course of writing your document or presentation. It is a list of items that turned out to be relevant, and which you mention in your paper.

The bibliography may contain many different types of cited works. The most common types are the following:

book: Newman, Stanley. 1944. *The Yokuts Language of California*. New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology 2.

journal article[4]*:* Cho, Taehong, Jun, Sun-Ah, and Ladefoged, Peter. 2002. Acoustic and aerodynamic correlates of Korean stops and fricatives. *Journal of Phonetics* 30:193-228.

chapter in anthology (book section): Johnson, Keith. 1997. Speech perception without speaker normalization. In *Talker variability in speech processing*, eds. Keith Johnson and John W. Mullennix, 145-165. San Diego: Academic Press.

thesis:[5] Gunlogson, Christine. 1995. *Pronominal Prefixes in Babine-Witsuwit'en*. M.A. thesis, Department of Linguistics, University of Washington.

dissertation: Tuttle, Siri G. 1998. *Metrical and tonal structures in Tanana Athabaskan*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Department of Linguistics, University of Washington.

presentation: Rice, Keren. 1982. On stems and Lexical Phonology. Paper presented at Canadian Linguistic Association, June 1982, Ottawa.

There are typically five kinds of information included in a reference: author's name,[6] date, title, place of publication, publisher. For something that is part of a larger publication, such as an article from a journal or a book, page numbers are also included.

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[4]Note the difference between journal and article: a journal contains articles.

[5]In linguistics 'thesis' conventionally means M.A. thesis and 'dissertation' means PhD dissertation.

Less commonly cited types of works are:

unpublished ms.: Kari, James. 1975. Babine, A New Linguistic Grouping. Ms.
unpublished ms. on web site: Deacon, Edna, James Dementi, Raymond Dutchman, Katherine Hamilton, Lucy Hamilton, Hamilton Hamilton, Alta Jerue, Hannah Maillelle, Ellen Savage, Donna Miller MacAlpine, Alice Taff, Sharon Hargus, Louise Dementi Winkelman, Marilyn Chase Jones, and Beth Dementi Leonard. 2007. Deg Xinag Ałixi Ni'elyoy: Deg Xinag Learners' Dictionary, Ms., http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANL/course/view.php?id=7.
software on web site: Hayes, Bruce, Bruce Tesar, and Kie Zuraw. 2003. OTSoft 2.1 (software package). http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/otsoft/.

A web site, if it clearly has an author and date, should be cited the same as an unpublished ms. on a web site. The best web sites will tell you how they should be cited:

web site: Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2014. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition.* Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com

Reference style

Historically, there has been variation within linguistics on how the items in a reference list are formatted. Here are examples of a book reference, formatted for two different journals:

formatted for *Language*: NEWMAN, STANLEY. 1944. The Yokuts Language of California. New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology.
formatted for *Linguistic Inquiry*: Newman, Stanley. 1944. *The Yokuts Language of California*. New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology.

A publisher will typically provide information in a style sheet about how references should be formatted. Style sheets can be found by googling particular journals or publishers.

In linguistics, there is now something of a consensus on reference style:

http://linguistlist.org/pubs/tocs/JournalUnifiedStyleSheet2007.pdf

If the style sheet does not specify, then use the Unified style.

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[6]In some reference lists, only initials are provided instead of full first names. An unabbreviated first name is more helpful when looking up the cited source in a library database. However, some authors prefer to use initials, and/or prefer to use a middle initial as well as first name. Authors' wishes should be respected. Journals may also have particular requirements about initials vs. full first names.

The most important thing is to use a consistent style within your document or presentation.

Peer review

Not all potential sources of information are considered equally convincing and reliable. Generally, the most convincing references are publications, because published books and articles are supposed to have been peer-reviewed. Here is how peer review works: An author writes a document and submits it for publication to a journal or book series of a publisher (for-profit or not-for-profit). An editor appointed by the publisher then selects two or three "external reviewers" or "referees" to read the submitted book or article, provide comments (usually anonymously), and a recommendation as to whether to publish or not. The editor collects the comments, weighs them and then makes a decision as to whether or not the work represents a substantial enough contribution to knowledge to warrant publication. The editor will typically inform the author of one of the following verdicts: publish as is, publish with changes, revise and resubmit, or reject. If the verdict is anything except reject, the author is given a chance to revise the book or article to reflect referees' comments---i.e. improve the work. When the work is resubmitted, it may go through the same or a shorter review process depending on what the editor feels is necessary.

Although information can easily be located on the web, most(?) items on the web have not been peer-reviewed. For this reason academic writing typically does not include documents which can be found (only) on the web.

Primary vs. secondary sources

Vance 1987 is a good example of a 'secondary source'. Vance 1987 is essentially a guide, with commentary, to previous research on Japanese phonology. There is some, but not much original research (data and/or analysis) on Japanese phonology in Vance 1987.

Secondary sources can be very useful starting points in doing research. However, secondary sources should be used with caution. As mentioned above, it is considered bad scholarship to cite without personally checking the references.

Software

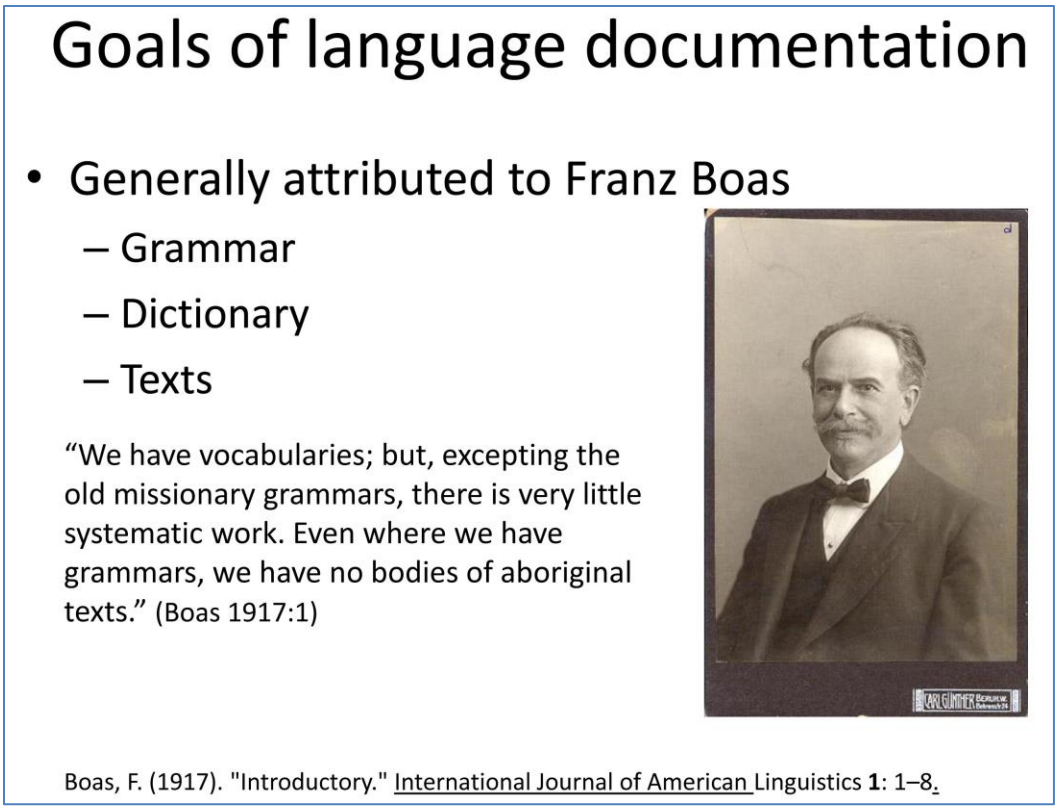
Software is available to alleviate much of the drudgery involved with citation and reference, e.g. Endnote, RefWorks, Zotero, and BibTeX.

Endnote works with Microsoft Word as follows. When Endnote is installed, a plug-in within Microsoft Word is created. Users create a database of references within Endnote, and can specify formatting preferences for citations and reference lists. When writing a document, an entry within the database is selected within Endnote. Then in Word, click "insert citation" at the place in a sentence where the citation is to appear. A properly formatted citation is then inserted at that point in the sentence, and a properly formatted reference is inserted at the end of the document. (Notice that this ensures that all and only cited works appear in the bibliography.)

Citation and reference in slide presentations

All of the above is oriented towards explaining conventions concerning citation and reference in documents, including presented documents such as handouts. Citation and reference in slide presentations is trickier. I have found the best thing is to include full references (in small font) on each slide, rather than citations and a slide of references at the end (unless you are giving your audience handouts of your slides and references). People want to know your sources as you are going along, and obviously cannot flip to the last slide to find out what "Kagaya 1974" refers to. And if you provide a slide of your references at the end, your audience will have lost track of what the references were relevant to. Moreover, I have never seen anyone linger over a reference slide long enough for anyone to extract information.

In the following sample slide, 'Boas 1917:1' is the citation for the quote provided, and the reference is spelled out at the foot of the slide. Separating the citation and reference allows listeners to skip the detail of the reference if they want, but it is there for those who want to know what "Boas 1917" is.



Final thoughts

Start paying attention to how and whether sources of information are cited:

- in textbooks
- in linguistics journal articles from 50 years ago
- in popular science books/articles
- in general media (e.g. *The Seattle Times*)
- in Wikipedia

References

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