

Add-on Lecture 6

في هذه المحاضره الإضافات قليل جداً طريقتة كانت يمشي على كل نقطه ويعطي مثال سريع

Literature review :

- It's 2nd chapter or section in your research.
- In Literature Review (LR) you tell us about previous finding , the previous existing knowledge and theories.
- Ex: in 1:20
- In Literature Review you review the previous studies.
- Ex: (x) in 1:50

Essence of Literature review : (الجوهر / الخلاصه)

(1) you review previous research (2) criticize the methods they used (3) and then you tell us the connections between the previous studies and your research.

→ this Essence is very important .. if you don't do it ; then it's not Literature Review and your Literature Review is going to be rubbish.

a good Literature Review will be a third of write up (or of the research)

Ex: you required to write research of 3000 words >> the LR must be 1000 words.

** the ideal number of a good Literature Review (words) is: third of the whole research.

! see also <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~scholp/litrevsarc.htm>

^^ وضع هذا الرابط للاستزاده .. في النقاط التي يجب مراعاتها خلال كتابة الـ LR نسخت محتواها في الصفحه الثانيه

The tongue-in-cheek guide to writing a literature review as part of an empirical research project

Include everything faintly connected with your topic. Don't bother to sift out what is central and omit material that is distant: you don't want to be short of material!

A 'random walk' through a topic is so much more interesting than a structured, logical progression with lots of headings and subheadings for different aspects of the topic. The reader likes a mystery tour in a piece of academic writing. If it is all vaguely to do with your research topic, what more can the reader expect?

Especially, don't tell the reader beforehand what areas you are going to review, and why.

A nice idea is to use the title of a chapter or section in a review just as a starting point. Then take the reader off into a mystery tour of all sorts of areas that don't belong under that heading.

Make sure the review is so broad and long that there is no room for anything much original of your own. Quoting other people is so much more impressive than your own comment or analysis, or links shown with your own experience, country, project etc.

Give all your sources equal weight. If it is published somewhere it must be true and all truth is equal, yes? That means there is

- No need to check where your source got their information from: whether they are just quoting someone else or actually did original research themselves or indeed if it is just a personal opinion.

- No need to criticise the reasoning used by any source to arrive at a statement. No need to be bothered about whether your source is consistent with current relevant theories in the field.

- No need to bother with trivia like whether their research method was sound or not, whether their questionnaire questions were ambiguous, what subjects they had etc., or whether they are just retailing a personal anecdote. It's the ideas that count.

- No need for you to compare what anyone says with what anyone else says and add any argument of your own as to which is more likely to be true.

If two sources are using the same terms for what they are talking about, then they must be talking about the same thing, right? After all, in applied linguistics and ELT people never vary in how they use key terminology. E.g. they all use 'communicative' for the same thing, they all mean the same thing by 'function' etc.... So you never need to question if they really are talking about the same thing as each other, or you...

If two people make the same point it must be right. Better if several say it, quoting each other.

There's joy in repetition. If you've made a point once, quoting someone's opinion on something or giving some fact, it must be worth doing again. In particular make sure you

Separate the repetition of the same point by a few pages so with luck the reader will think it is a new point

Even better, put it in a new section or chapter with a different title

Put it in different words, with a different source reference, and never mention that it is a point you have already made

Introduce it as a new point, even though it isn't.

When you are making a series of points from different sources, make sure you yourself never distinguish between where they are really saying the same thing and where they are saying the opposite. That is not your place. Just string it all together and leave the reader to figure it out.

If two sources clearly say different things on the same point, make sure you don't offend anyone by pointing this out. Above all don't add any reasoning of your own to choose between them.

It is much safer just to cite different opinions and never make it clear which you agree with and are going to adopt for your work and which not. After all, you might pick the wrong one.

The best way to be critical about someone's work is to cite what other people have said about it. No point in hearing your voice as well.

It's especially handy when sources use different terminology for much the same thing, as often happens in applied linguistics and ELT. Be sure not to point this out. E.g. an article about 'consolidation' or about 'mnemonics' must surely be about something different from 'retention'.

Also useful is to cite other people's research in as little detail as possible. Don't bother to mention what country it was in (the same one your project will be in or not?), what languages involved, what level of learners or whatever. That way the account is so vague it looks as if it could apply to almost anything, including your research. After all, for example, what is said about teaching writing at one level in one particular teaching situation in one country must surely apply to any situation on any country, including the one your study is going to be on?

If you do do a longer review of a key article, be sure to follow the agenda of the article itself, even if it is different from yours. It would not do just to cherry-pick the points that are relevant to your own project and leave out the rest.

The main point to extract from a summary of an article – the ‘importance’ of the article - is what the author of it thought was important, not what is important about it for YOUR study.

Don't bother to summarise the overall picture that emerges from a group of sources you go over. After all, the reader should be made to do some of the dissertation work for you.

If you do provide a summary, make sure it is a summary of everything you reviewed, not just of the points derived from all that which are relevant to your own project.

Assuming you do go on to report some empirical work of your own after the review, make sure there is as little connection as possible with the review. After all, the two are quite different parts of the work. For example

In your review, never refer to the study you are going to do, or extract any predictions for what your study might find. Leave the reader to spot the connection later

Better, make your study deal with something different from what was covered in the literature review. You don't want the reader to get bored

If you do comment on your sources, be sure to point out the interest and importance of issues, variables etc. that in fact you are not going to include in your own study. The reader will enjoy the surprise of having been led to expect that you are going to gather data on one thing and find later that you have actually gathered data on something quite different

It would be bad form to revise your lit review after gathering your data to make sure it connects. Once you have written it, leave it

If your own project has a list of research questions or hypotheses, never point out what bits of the literature review (if any) prompted them. Just list them and leave the reader to figure out what there was in the previous 50 pages of review that had any connection with them

Don't relate your 'method' to that used by other studies. You don't want to look unoriginal or appear to have learnt anything from others' experience or mistakes

If you are evaluating course materials from your country, make sure the criteria you use to evaluate them have nothing to do with the theories and research talked about in the literature review. They can't have any connection with your country, after all. Just dream up a miscellaneous set of your own

If you are administering a questionnaire the questions should be made up out of your head. Again, why learn from others' experience?

When you get the results, just summarise them. It would be presumptuous to try to relate them to any other research reported earlier in your review.

PJS Written in MA dissertation and PhD thesis shock, Oct. 96 with slight additions 04

PS Just in case you have not spotted it, the above is SARCASTIC.

A good review does the opposite of all those things.

The End ..