Uppsatsskrivandet i ett romanskt språk
Academic writing in a Romance Language

Christophe Premat
Pedagogisk ambassadör 2018 (CeUL)
Preliminary remarks

• Type of essay (Bachelor? Essay? What kind of course?)
• Discuss with your neighbours the type of essay you are currently working with (level...) (5 minutes). Give an accurate explanation. What is the expected result?
• Concrete expectations: how to write in a foreign language? How can I structure an essay? How can I present my sources? How can I design a research question?
• Why do I write the essay? What is the goal?
• A lot of help to write an academic essay but too few tips for the combination of academic writing and foreign language
• The goal of the seminar: the double challenge of academic writing in a foreign language, instead of being a double punishment, can be a specific strength.
Preliminary remarks: the double challenge of an academic text in a foreign language

Essay: combination of two aspects

Research question / organization of the text

Foreign language (idiomatic expressions, connectors, typical organization of the text)
The multiplicity of the sources

- References in the mother tongue
  - Control of references (second hand references)

- References in the target language
  - Primary sources (may be found in the target language)

- References in other languages (English...)
  - Depending on the field of the topic (Cultural studies, Literature or Linguistics)
Academic writing in second language acquisition

- Identifying a more idiomatic way of expressing in the target language
- Building the research question (clarification in the mother tongue and the target language)
- Finding and bordering the field and the appropriate references
Plan of the seminar

• 1) Dispersion / concentration
• 2) Research question
• 3) The support of the target language in the academic writing
1) Dispersion / concentration: the power of key-words

- It might be good to use handwriting
- Do not neglect the first steps. Tendency to jump into the ocean of references without reflecting enough on the goal of the essay. There is a necessity to fly around the topic. If you have to identify the topic of the essay, think about the field and the similar questions that may be addressed. What can be relevant/irrelevant?
- If the essay topic is proposed in the target language, use the translation to multiply the possible connections. In small groups, collect a few key-words on your essay (10 mins). Ask your neighbour about his/her spontaneous reactions and identifications when he/she reads the topic of your essay
- The key-words will be useful if you have to define a title (kandidatuppsats)
1) Dispersion / concentration

- The exemplification (*repertoire*). When you have an essay, you may think about concrete examples.
- You need to have a list of concrete examples, they will be useful.
- What kind of concrete examples? How can you relate them to the key-words of the essay?
- The examples need to be accurate (period, actors, short explanation). In a later process, they will be associated with sources (primary sources of the essay).
- Ask your neighbour about his/her potential examples that he/she may use in the essay (10 mins)
1) Dispersion / concentration

• Concentration: selection of appropriate references / key-words to build the essay.
• Building an essay: proposing an accurate research question and structuring the answer
• Strategic and methodological points: what are the most appropriate examples? What are the best key-words?
• Research question: formulating a tension in the topic (risk to take)
• Accepting to border the topic (selection)
1) Dispersion / concentration

Concentration (selection of words / formulations that are included in the research question)
Key-words / formulations (intermediary step)/ need to polish the resources
Irrelevant aspects
1) Dispersion / concentration

• **Translating** the key-words (mother tongue / target language)
• Organize the set of references (balance between languages)
• **Sources**: selecting the most appropriate ones
• Wikipedia : good starting-point / you can compare with the National Encyclopedia (for the Swedish sources). **Fiability** (use the Wikipedia sources in other languages and in the target language)
• Compare the facts / information / sources and the way these pages are organized. The work has to be done. Compare in small groups the Wikipedia sources that surround your topic (5 minutes). Is the information substantial with a presentation of the references?
1) Dispersion / concentration

- **Student quotes** on Wikipedia (Kurs i franska, VT 2018)
-Kommentera källan
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinqui%C3%A8me_R%C3%A9publique_(France)
- Har artikeln hjälpt dig att ha en klarare bild av den politiska kulturen i Frankrike?
- « Ja, den är mycket informativ och lätt att navigera. Språket är tidvis svårt, men överkomligt »
- « Absolut. Men för att faktiskt skaffa sig en uppfattning i sådana stora, samhälleliga frågor tror jag det krävs mer tid och ett annat sammanhang. T ex att läsa franska dagstidningar, etc – för att inte tala om att vistas i landet ». 
- « Tycker att det blir pratigt och oöverskådligt och dåligt uppspaltat. Lån nog vara så att det står där ordentligt, men med min franskanivå blir det otydligt och hade vunnit på att spaltas/punktas upp »
1) Dispersion (brainstorming) / concentration

- At this stage, need to **order the references**
- Comment **the sources** / balance of languages. The list of references should reflect your position (your theoretical allies / enemies)
- The use of **paradigms / theories / methodologies**
- For yourself, it is good to see how you selected the references (the process)
2) Research question

- It is not necessary to have the research question and write later on.
- The research question can be strengthened.
- Coherence between the research question / the structure / the references.
- It can be good to write a preconclusion first to guide your writing.
- It should be an answerable inquiry (you should be able to answer the question). Avoid too large questions, absolute questions (what?).
- Process of correcting and nuancing the question.
- Tricky to find (you have to evolve from other research questions and find your own question). It should be a personal question (you are interested in a question because you wonder something).
- Complex and concise question that can be investigated (you can reback over and check the question).
- Good to have a strong question (not a descriptive question, an investigative question).
2) Research question

It might be difficult and frustrating to formulate a question in another language.
2) Research question

- Formulate the question in the target language
- Use the translation (similar questions in different search motors)
- First formulations / google search / variation of motors
2) Research question

• The research question is not **the given topic**
• You have the topic (field) and you extract a specific question from it
• You can choose **subtopics** that can connect and be the material to build a research question (think in terms of **sequences** that you select to produce a research question).
• You locate the topic, the area of focus, make sure that the research question fits the topics. You can raise intermediary questions that you will improve (break the question into subquestions so that you can have a better **research question**)
3) The support of the target language in the academic writing

- A few tips to write in another language.
- What is your style? (5 mins)
- Are you a **translator**? (you prefer to translate from/to your mother tongue?)
- Are you an **explorer**? (you take risks directly in the target language)
- Are you a **mixer**? (you use both methods to write)
3) The support of the target language in the academic writing

• Choose a style, write in different languages if necessary before translating into the target language

• You can « google » idiomatic expressions and see whether they are relevant (you need to question yourself. Can I say that in Portuguese? Is it the same expression?). Sometimes, the expression in the target language has an added value.

• Prepare a list of connectors that you can use when you rephrase some parts of the essay.
3) The support of the target language in the academic writing

- **Synonyms** are important. How can you express that statement in another way?
- Romance languages: importance of *captatio benevolentiae* / *dispositio* / *argumentatio*
Conclusion

- Do not kill creativity by depending on what the others say (quotes and material). Risk of plagiarism when you depend on specific sources (paraphrasing).
- Do not neglect the brainstorming phase before bordering your topic.
- **Use and read material in the target language** (the sources must help the reader to locate your research material).
- Use the target language as a way of rempowering the final text (a detour in the target language can help you to formulate accurate and sometimes complex things).
Brainstorming utan Google. Man tolkar frågan, man tar exempel, synonymer

Brainstorming med Google / Källinhämtning

Val av relevanta källor

Konstruktion av en frågeställning

Berättande process
Blooms taxonomy (Bloom, 1956)
References