

chicago style for linguistic evidence

chicago style for linguistic evidence is a crucial component for researchers and academics working with spoken or written language data. Understanding how to properly document and present linguistic evidence ensures clarity, reproducibility, and credibility in scholarly work. This comprehensive guide delves into the nuances of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) as it applies to the citation and presentation of linguistic data, from the initial collection to the final integration into academic prose. We will explore best practices for handling various forms of linguistic evidence, including direct quotes, indirect paraphrases, and the use of specialized notation, all within the framework of CMOS's renowned author-date and notes-bibliography systems.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is one of the most widely used citation and style guides in the English-speaking world, particularly within the humanities and social sciences, including linguistics. It offers two primary systems for citation: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both systems aim to provide readers with clear and complete information about the sources used, allowing them to locate the original materials if necessary. For linguistic evidence, the choice of system can depend on the specific journal, publisher, or academic department's requirements, but the underlying principles of accurate and consistent attribution remain paramount.

When dealing with linguistic evidence, the challenge often lies in presenting data that might be unconventional or require specialized formatting. CMOS provides general guidelines that can be adapted to these specific needs. This adaptability is key for linguists who frequently work with phonetic transcriptions, dialectal variations, or nuanced grammatical structures that may not fit neatly into standard citation templates for books or articles. The manual emphasizes clarity and reader convenience above all else, which is a valuable principle when presenting complex linguistic findings.

The Notes-Bibliography System for Linguistic Evidence

The notes-bibliography system is characterized by the use of numbered notes (footnotes or endnotes) within the text, which correspond to a bibliography at the end of the work. For linguistic evidence, this system allows for detailed explanations or annotations within the notes that might be cumbersome to include directly in the main text. For example, a note can elaborate on the specific transcription conventions used or provide context for a particular utterance. The bibliography then lists all sources cited in the notes, providing full bibliographic details for each.

When citing spoken language in a note, it is often helpful to include specific details about the recording or transcription. This might include the speaker's name or identifier, the date of the recording, the location, and the specific segment of audio or video being referenced. For written sources, standard book or article citation formats apply, but with a focus on identifying the specific linguistic features being discussed.

The Author-Date System for Linguistic Evidence

The author-date system places parenthetical citations directly within the text, typically including the author's last name and the year of publication. A corresponding reference list at the end of the work provides full bibliographic details. This system is often favored in fields where frequent citations are necessary and the author's intent is to emphasize the source of the argument. In linguistic research, it can be effective for attributing specific theories or findings to particular scholars.

Adapting the author-date system for linguistic evidence requires careful consideration of how to present the source of the data. If citing a published corpus or database, the entry in the reference list would include the name of the corpus, its editors or compilers, the publication year, and publication information. If referring to a specific interview or field recording, the citation might need to include an identifier for the informant and the date of collection, alongside any broader publication details if the recording has been made publicly available.

Citing Spoken Language Data

Citing spoken language data presents unique challenges because it often involves primary, unpublished, or uniquely recorded materials. The goal is to provide enough information for a reader to understand the source of the data and, ideally, to access it if it has been archived or published. This often means going beyond standard bibliographic entries to include details specific to the recording.

For unpublished recordings, such as interviews conducted by the researcher or archival audio materials, the citation should include as much identifying information as possible. This typically includes the name of the informant or speaker, the date of the recording, the location of the recording, and any archive or collection where the material is housed. For published collections of spoken language, the citation would follow the standard format for the medium, such as a book or a multimedia resource.

Direct Quotations from Spoken Language

When directly quoting spoken language, especially in phonetic transcription or with specific dialectal features, it is essential to be precise. The quote itself should be enclosed in quotation marks. If the transcription uses specialized phonetic symbols, it is good practice to explain the transcription system in a footnote, endnote, or within the text itself, particularly if it deviates from widely accepted standards like the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The citation should immediately follow the quotation.

For example, a citation in the notes-bibliography system might look like this: "[Speech sample in transcription]' (Informant ID, date, location, archive accession number)." In the author-date system, it might appear as: "[Speech sample in transcription]' (Informant ID, date, location, archive accession number, year)." The precise format will depend on how the spoken language source itself is cataloged and presented in the bibliography or reference list.

Indirect Quotations and Paraphrases of Spoken Language

When paraphrasing or summarizing spoken language, the citation still needs to attribute the idea or statement to the source. While the verbatim quotation marks are not used, the information must be clearly linked to the speaker and the context. The citation still directs the reader to the specific recording or source from which the information was derived.

The level of detail in the citation for paraphrased material can sometimes be slightly less granular than for direct quotations, but it should still be sufficient to pinpoint the source. For instance, referring to a general observation made by a speaker across several recordings might necessitate a broader citation pointing to the corpus or collection of interviews with that individual, rather than a specific timestamp, unless the point is tied to a particular moment.

Citing Written Language Data

Written language data can range from historical documents and literary works to contemporary digital texts and social media posts. The principles of citation in CMOS apply here, but the specific details will vary based on the type of written source.

For published books and articles, standard CMOS citation formats for those mediums are used. This includes the author's name, title of the work, publication year, and publishing information. When referring to specific linguistic features within these texts, it is crucial to pinpoint the exact location, such as a page number, paragraph number, or line number, to allow readers to find the evidence easily.

Literary and Historical Texts

Citing literary and historical texts, especially those with complex structures like plays or poetry, requires attention to specific reference points. For plays, citations typically include the act, scene, and line numbers. For poetry, line numbers are essential. For historical documents, citing the manuscript name, archive, and folio or page numbers is standard practice.

When discussing linguistic aspects of these texts, it is vital to be specific about the passage being analyzed. For example, "Shakespeare's *Hamlet* employs numerous instances of iambic pentameter. For instance, in Act 1, Scene 2, line 56, Hamlet laments, 'O, that this too too solid flesh would melt.'" The citation for the play would then follow, directing the reader to the edition used.

Contemporary Written Sources

Contemporary written sources, including websites, blog posts, social media, and digital publications, require careful citation to ensure their accessibility. For websites, including the author (if available), title of the specific page or article, website name, publication or last updated date, and the URL is necessary. However, CMOS strongly advises against relying on URLs alone and recommends including enough information to identify the source even if the link breaks.

For social media, citations often include the author's username, the date of the post, and the platform. The content of the post itself should be presented with quotation marks. For instance, a tweet might be cited as: "@username, '[Tweet text]', Platform, Month Day, Year." Again, the full details would appear in the bibliography or reference list.

Presenting Linguistic Notation

Linguistic analysis often requires the use of specialized notation, such as phonetic symbols, phonemic transcriptions, or glosses. CMOS offers guidance on how to present these notations clearly and consistently within academic writing.

The primary goal is to ensure that the notation is understandable to the intended audience. If using standard IPA symbols, it is generally understood by linguists, but it is still good practice to confirm whether a key or chart is needed for a broader audience. For less common notations, explicit explanation is almost always required.

Phonetic and Phonemic Transcriptions

When presenting phonetic transcriptions (using square brackets, e.g., [ˈtʃɪkəɡoʊ]) or

phonemic transcriptions (using slashes, e.g., /'tʃɪkəgəʊ/), accuracy and consistency are paramount. The symbols used should conform to established standards like the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). If the work uses a simplified or modified transcription system, a clear explanation and a key to the symbols should be provided, often in an appendix or as part of the introduction.

It is also important to indicate the context of the transcription. For example, is it broad or narrow phonetic transcription? Does it represent a specific speaker's pronunciation, or a generalized pronunciation of a word or phrase? This context should be provided in the surrounding text or in a footnote.

Glosses and Morphological Analysis

Glosses are used to translate or explain the grammatical components of words or phrases, particularly in the analysis of unfamiliar languages or complex morphology. A standard format for glossing, often referred to as the Leipzig Glossing Rules, is widely adopted in linguistic publications. This involves providing a clear, multi-line presentation of the original form, the glossed components, and the translation.

For example, a word might be presented as: "run-PAST.3SG.PRES 'he ran.'" The abbreviations used in the gloss (PAST, 3SG, PRES) should be defined in a key. CMOS suggests that such examples, especially when they are central to the argument, should be presented clearly, often on separate lines, to enhance readability and ensure that the linguistic analysis is easily understood.

Handling Specialized Linguistic Data

Linguistics often involves working with data that is not easily captured by standard text formats. This includes audio and video recordings, corpus data, and large datasets. Proper handling and citation of such materials are essential for academic integrity.

The key is to treat these specialized data types with the same rigor as traditional print sources. This means providing sufficient descriptive information for retrieval and verification. When in doubt, it is always best to err on the side of providing more detail.

Corpus Linguistics and Datasets

When citing a linguistic corpus, such as the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) or a specialized research corpus, the citation should include the name of the corpus, its creators or editors, the version or year of access, and any relevant publication details. If specific search queries or data extracts are being referenced, it may be helpful to provide information about how that data was retrieved.

For instance, a citation might read: "Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), compiled by Mark Davies, Brigham Young University, accessed [Date], [URL if applicable]." If specific examples are being drawn, a note explaining the search parameters might be included. The goal is to allow another researcher to replicate the process of data retrieval.

Audio and Video Recordings

As discussed earlier in the context of spoken language, audio and video recordings require detailed citation. This includes identifying the speakers, the date and location of recording, the format of the recording (e.g., MP3 file, DAT tape), and its repository or archive. If the recording has been published or made available online, the URL or bibliographic details for the published version should be provided.

When referring to specific segments of audio or video, providing timestamps is crucial for precise reference. For example, a note might read: "Interview with J. Smith, May 15, 2023, at her home in Chicago. Audio recording. Timestamp 0:15:30-0:17:45." This level of detail ensures that the reader can locate the exact material being discussed.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating the citation of linguistic evidence can be complex, and several common pitfalls can arise. Awareness of these issues and adherence to best practices can significantly improve the quality and credibility of research.

One common pitfall is insufficient detail in citations. This can leave readers unable to locate the source material, undermining the transparency of the research. Conversely, overly obscure or non-standard citation methods can confuse readers. Consistency is key; once a method is chosen, it should be applied uniformly throughout the work.

Inconsistent Citation Practices

Inconsistency in citing linguistic evidence is a frequent problem. This can manifest as varying levels of detail for similar types of sources or the use of different citation formats within the same document. For example, citing one interview with full details and another with only a name and date creates confusion.

The best practice is to establish a clear citation style guide for your specific project or to adhere strictly to the chosen CMOS system. Develop a template for each type of source material you will be citing (e.g., interview, published article, corpus data) and use it consistently. This uniformity ensures that readers can rely on the citation system.

Over-reliance on Informal Citations

Another pitfall is the over-reliance on informal or incomplete citations, particularly for unpublished primary data. Phrases like "as one speaker put it" without any further attribution are unacceptable in formal academic writing. Even for informal interactions, if the linguistic data is important to your argument, it requires proper citation.

Always aim to provide the fullest possible attribution. If you are quoting a colleague's informal remark in a conversation, and it is crucial evidence, you should seek their permission and provide their name and the context (e.g., "personal communication, Month Day, Year"). For field notes, ensure they are properly documented and referenced.

Integrating Linguistic Evidence Smoothly

Presenting linguistic evidence effectively involves more than just citing it correctly; it requires seamless integration into the narrative of your research. The evidence should support your claims and be clearly explained to the reader.

The integration process should highlight the relevance of the linguistic data to your argument. Merely dropping a quote or a transcription into your text without explanation hinders understanding and weakens your analysis. Each piece of evidence should serve a clear purpose.

Contextualizing Linguistic Examples

Every piece of linguistic evidence, whether a direct quote, a transcription, or a summary, needs to be contextualized. This means explaining who said it, when, where, and under what circumstances. This context helps the reader understand the significance and limitations of the evidence.

For example, if you are presenting dialectal variation, explain the geographical origin of the speaker, their age, and any other relevant demographic information. If you are analyzing a grammatical structure, explain the communicative function or the pragmatic implications of its use in that specific instance. This contextualization makes the evidence meaningful.

Explaining Specialized Terminology and Notation

As mentioned previously, specialized linguistic notation and terminology must be explained. This applies not only to phonetic transcriptions but also to grammatical terms, theoretical concepts, and abbreviations used in glosses. If an explanation is provided in a footnote or appendix, ensure that the reader is clearly directed to it.

The goal is to make your work accessible to your intended audience. If you are writing for a general academic audience, more explanation might be needed than if you are writing for a specialized group of phoneticians. However, even within specialized fields, clarity and thoroughness are always appreciated.

The Role of Chicago Style in Linguistic Research

The Chicago Manual of Style, with its emphasis on clarity, detail, and flexibility, serves as an invaluable framework for linguistic research. Its adaptable nature allows researchers to navigate the complexities of citing diverse linguistic data, from spoken utterances to digitized corpora.

By adhering to the principles of Chicago style, linguists can ensure that their work is not only rigorous and credible but also accessible to a wider scholarly community. Proper citation practices are fundamental to the scientific endeavor, promoting transparency, enabling verification, and contributing to the cumulative growth of knowledge in the field of linguistics.

FAQ Section

Q: What is the primary difference between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in Chicago style for linguistic evidence?

A: The notes-bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources, accompanied by a bibliography at the end. The author-date system uses parenthetical citations (Author Year) within the text, followed by a reference list. For linguistic evidence, the notes-bibliography system often allows for more detailed explanations or annotations about the data within the notes, while the author-date system emphasizes the origin of the idea or finding.

Q: How should I cite a specific utterance from a field recording in Chicago style?

A: When citing a specific utterance from a field recording, you should provide as much identifying information as possible. This typically includes the speaker's name or identifier, the date of the recording, the location, and the archive or collection where it is housed. For direct quotes, include the transcribed utterance in quotation marks, followed by the citation in parentheses or a note. If possible, provide a timestamp for the specific utterance.

Q: What are the key elements to include when citing a

linguistic corpus in Chicago style?

A: When citing a linguistic corpus, include the full name of the corpus, its compilers or editors, the name of the institution responsible for its creation (if applicable), the version or year of access, and its publication details (if published). If you are referencing specific data extracted from the corpus, it is good practice to mention the parameters of your search or retrieval method, and potentially provide a URL if it is publicly accessible.

Q: How do I cite a dialectal variation or non-standard English in my Chicago-style paper?

A: When citing dialectal variations or non-standard English, you must accurately transcribe the linguistic forms. Enclose direct quotations in quotation marks. Ensure that the citation following the quote provides complete source information, identifying the speaker and the context. If specialized phonetic symbols or non-standard orthography are used, provide a clear explanation of your transcription conventions, often in a footnote or a dedicated section.

Q: Is there a specific format for glossing in Chicago style?

A: While Chicago style doesn't prescribe a rigid format for glossing, it strongly recommends clarity and consistency. The widely accepted Leipzig Glossing Rules are generally considered the standard in linguistics. This involves providing a morphological breakdown of words with standardized abbreviations for grammatical categories, followed by the English translation. Ensure these abbreviations are defined in a key or glossary.

Q: Can I cite personal communications or unpublished notes in Chicago style?

A: Yes, you can cite personal communications and unpublished notes. For personal communications (e.g., conversations, emails), you should include the communicator's name, the type of communication (e.g., personal communication, email), and the date it occurred. For unpublished notes or manuscripts, provide as much bibliographic detail as possible, including author, title, date, and the repository where they are held.

Q: How should I handle the presentation of IPA transcriptions in a Chicago-style document?

A: When using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions, ensure they are accurate and consistently applied. Enclose phonetic transcriptions in square brackets ([]) and phonemic transcriptions in slashes (/ /). If your audience might not be familiar with all IPA symbols, it is advisable to provide a key or chart of the symbols used, usually in an appendix or within the text upon first use.

Q: What is the rule of thumb for how much detail to include in a citation for linguistic evidence?

A: The rule of thumb is to provide enough detail so that another researcher can locate the exact source material you are referencing. This means including author, title, publication information, date, and any specific identifiers like page numbers, line numbers, timestamps, or archive accession numbers, depending on the nature of the evidence. When in doubt, provide more information rather than less.

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