

Review: "A Kuhnian Analysis of Paradigm Shift in Recent Biological Taxonomy"
Paper 1

General Comments:

1. My biggest general concern is that this paper is too much regurgitation of Sherrie Lyons' thesis. You need to do more than just tell us what Lyons said and her conclusions. Most of the paper seems to lack analysis, though it is hard to tell at points because I do not know how much came from Lyons' essay. Just be really careful that you do not fall victim to the temptation to state her thesis and argue, more or less, her points, even if you cite her. Try to add some of your own analysis and perspective on what she says, perhaps assessing the validity on certain fronts and exposing its faults in other areas. As I was going through it did not appear to me that you were analyzing the facts that you present. It was only in the last paragraph that I really felt like you were critically examining and making judgments on what you read. It was like one big build up and accumulation of facts for a paragraph of analysis. It would be better to intersperse analysis and fact, in addition to offering more overall analysis. I would definitely expand on some of the points that you make in the end, which I feel were reasonable judgments about what you had read.
2. It would help me if page numbers were added. I always appreciate that.
3. You include a bibliography, which is great, but even if it is obvious who said what quote, you must include a citation next to the specific part that you are taking from the work. You may use endnotes, with numbers denoting the specific citations, but I think it would be easiest just to you in-text citations. All you would need to do is add "(Lyons pg#)" at the end of the sentence containing the citation. Look up the MLA format to be sure, but it should be relatively easy and is more standard/better.
4. Your grammar and is pretty good. You do not make many mistakes with sentence structure or misusages, which is great. (I was particularly impressed that you did not put an apostrophe in "1980s," which lots of people do.) Since you are good at the grammatical aspects, spend extra time considering exactly what points you are making and how you are driving them home. (Also note that with this comment means that most of my corrections to grammar and the like are less absolute and more "I think this might be better.")
5. Bibliography should be alphabetic.

Paragraph Comments:

Paragraph 1 (Page 1):

1. Your second sentence is, as a whole, very awkward. It is long, and it is unclear whether it is a complete sentence. I would definitely rephrase it. I would also consider eliminating "a structure of" from the sentence. Simply saying "a shared set of beliefs" seems sufficient.
2. In the third sentence, "Lyon's" should be "Lyons' " (Lyons's is also acceptable, usually a matter of the writer's preference) since here name ends in an "s."
3. Your thesis (which I took to be the last sentence of the first paragraph) seems to just regurgitate what I assume Lyons was trying to prove. I talked a lot about this above, so I will not belabor the point, but here is where you need to state what analysis you

will make and which subjects they will concern. What is your paper trying to prove, different from what Lyons was trying to prove? You mention “implications” on the scientific community. In my mind, that is probably the more original and relevant point that your thesis (and paper) should drive at.

Paragraph 2 (Page 1 &2):

1. For this paragraph (and almost all body paragraphs) there should be some sort of “sign posting” as to what the paragraph is getting at. Each paragraph should have a point that it is trying to make, or a view it is presenting. At the beginning of the paragraph, let the reader know what that point is. For this paragraph especially, being the first one after the introduction, it is important to tell the reader where the paragraph is going.
2. In the second sentence, you should italicize the title of Kuhn’s book. (You did this earlier, you probably just forgot here. No worries.)
3. You do not need to say “Thomas Kuhn” again. “Kuhn” will suffice (since you told us his first name in the first paragraph).
4. In the last sentence on the first paragraph I would make a few grammar modifications. First, be careful about the word “basically,” it is very colloquial. Second, I would (in the last line on the page) eliminate “and which should be disregarded.” It is implied. Also consider how many times “which” is used in that sentence.
5. I would consider eliminating “Then” at the start of the next page. It seems superfluous.
6. I have said this, but I made a note that this paragraph sounded to me like regurgitation. Analysis can be added.

Paragraph 3 (Page 2):

1. In the middle of this paragraph you say “Eukaryotes were defined....” Are they still defined that way? You read Lyons’ article, so you would know better, but I questioned the tense. (If you do happen to change it make sure to get the other “were” in the next sentence.)
2. In the same sentence starting “Eukaryotes...” I would simplify “as such by the fact that they possess” to just “by their.” It is a long and roundabout way of saying something simple, even if you do not like my suggestion, consider simplifying as eliminating unnecessary words is always good.
3. Be careful with orphan quotes, as used at the end of this paragraph on “pre-paradigmatic state.” If this is to indicate that you are mirroring Kuhn’s phrasing, you should provide a citation. If not, consider eliminating them. (It is not to say that they are necessarily wrong, it is just that they should be used deliberately and I want to call your attention to their usage because people (myself included) tend to overuse orphan quotes.)

Paragraph 4 (Page 2):

1. In the second sentence of this paragraph, consider changing “no more closely related to prokaryotes than eukaryotes” to “not closely related to either prokaryotes or eukaryotes.” Notice how this changes the meaning slightly. Your phrase describes

the relationship in relative terms (if the eukaryote relationship is X, it means something about the prokaryote relationship), whereas mine is in objective terms. You might have intentionally chosen a relative relationship, but I thought, from context, that an absolute relationship was closer to what was intended.

2. Consider eliminating wordage in “the environments they are found in” (perhaps “habitats”?).
3. The word “individual” in the next sentence is superfluous.

Paragraph 5 (Page 3):

1. Relatively few errors on this page, good job.
2. In the first sentence of the paragraph, check tense consistency (“suggest”), and consider changing the awkward “previously held notion” to “old paradigm,” but that may be a matter of preference.
3. You say, in the second sentence, “a *deletion* in an sequence...” I assume this is a purposeful word choice but it is hard to grasp exactly what you are talking about. What exactly is a “deletion” (of what?) in a sequence? This also may make sense to someone with more biology knowledge than I have (almost none) so feel free to ignore this comment if that is the case.
4. The sentence beginning “This led Gupta...” is confusing. You say a new classification was suggested, and then put a colon, after which the reader expects to hear what said classification change was. I feel like that comes in the next sentence when you explain the subdivisions. What you say after the colon seems like more clarification of the coming classification. (i.e. rephrase or use new punctuation and wording, or eliminate some of what follows the colon)

Paragraph 6 (Page 3 & 4):

1. This, the final paragraph, I felt was where the analysis began. You talk about what Lyons says and then begin to make judgments on it. There should be more of this. This is by far the best paragraph, if only for that fact. (Though it also happens to have very few errors.)
2. Do not use “but” twice in the same sentence, as you do in the second to last sentence. At any rate, this sentence is long and should probably be broken up.
3. I want to hear more about what you say in the last sentence. I can see how this is a good conclusion, but from the perspective of the paper as a whole, this is the beginning (or perhaps middle) of where you need to go with it. How does it not dampen our understanding? What is your overall suggestion about what we should do about classification? Because it “does not dampen our understanding,” does that mean you support the umbrella term? Just some things to think about.

I would offer some concluding remarks, but I feel I would just be repeating. I think you have the potential (and skills) for a really good paper, but the argumentation and points you want to make need to be more defined. Decide what point you want to make and drive it home. And remember to analyze. Good rough draft.