

Term Paper Guidelines

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1 Structure of a term paper in linguistics

I recommend the following structure for your term paper:

- **Title page:** See Styles section.
- **Table of contents:** with section numbers, subsection numbers, page numbers. Your term paper is not a book, so it contains sections and subsections, not chapters.
- **Introduction:** The introduction contains your motivation for dealing with the topic. State your goal in relation to the problem, give plausible examples and a brief outline of the paper.
- **Theoretical part:** The theoretical part gives the background of the paper and contains a discussion of the relevant technical terms (correctly used!) and research that has already been done on the topic and presents these results accurately and systematically. It ends with a formulation of your working hypothesis if you have an empirical part. If your paper is theoretical only, no empirical part is required. If your paper is empirical, the theory part should take up between 30% and 50% of the paper.

¹ Thanks to Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gut and Prof. Dr. Christina Sanchez-Stockhammer, in cooperation with whom a previous version of these guidelines was composed.

- **Empirical part:** First, you describe your data collection and analysis (Participants/ Corpus, Method, Analysis), then you present your results. (Do not name the headings 'Theoretical Part' and 'Empirical Part'. Rather, find headings that reflect the contents of these sections.)
- **Discussion and Conclusion:** In the discussion, you give a summary of your results and relate them to the goals discussed in the introduction and to the findings discussed in the theoretical part. Discuss problems which occurred and open questions which remain. Finally, possible applications of the results can be mentioned. You may also wish to give an outlook on further developments. Discussion and Conclusion can be one combined section or two separate sections.
- **References:** In the references you list all works cited in your paper according to the styles listed below. A paper for a *Proseminar* will contain at least eight references to research articles or monographs, a paper for a *Hauptseminar* at least twelve. Use only scholarly sources.
- **Appendix:** You may have extensive corpus data, tables of results, and so on. These belong in an appendix.

Remember that the basic function of any linguistics paper is to persuade the reader of the relevance, and innovative value of your results and interpretations. In principle, this also applies to your term paper.

2 Styles for papers in linguistics

The main point to remember is that formatting styles are intended to help your reader to read the paper as easily as possible and concentrate on what you are saying (which is in your own interest, too). Please make sure you follow these conventions in your paper.

- **Length:** In a *Proseminar*, your paper needs to be 8-10 pages long, in a *Hauptseminar* 12-15 pages (excluding title page, table of contents, references, appendix). Deviations from the required length of up to 10% are tolerated. In order to make papers

comparable, please stick to the following layout parameters for the text: 3 cm margins to all sides, Times New Roman size 12, 1.5 spaced.

- **Language:** Academic English is a quite different register from spoken English (for instance, academic texts do not use contracted forms such as *isn't*). Please make sure you use appropriate expressions and vocabulary.

Example: instead of writing "And then I looked at how long the vowel /a/ is before the /r/" write something along the lines of "Subsequently, the length of the vowel /a/ preceding an /r/ was measured". Read linguistic papers in journals to get a feeling for the style!

- **Title page:** The title page should have the following format:

Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

Anglistisches Seminar

HS Contrastive Linguistics

Lecturer: PD Dr. Sandra Mollin

SS 2021

Pronunciation Errors of German Learners of English:
A Case Study

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- **Tables and graphs** in the text are numbered and contain a short caption. Example:
Table 4. Number of students taking linguistics exams from 2000 to 2015

- **References in the text** are given in short form (author's name and year of publication: page) and NOT in a footnote. Example: As Leech (2015: 42) has pointed out, ...

Distinguish clearly between what you find in the literature and your own contribution. For the former, you need to indicate the source clearly. Do not copy passages from the internet or anywhere else without giving the appropriate reference. This is intellectual theft and leads to an automatic fail without a chance of rewriting your paper.

Direct quotations (copying a statement word for word) require to be set in quotation marks. In general, try to avoid these direct quotations, and rather reformulate the central ideas in your own words.

- **References in the bibliography** have the following style (as long as you are consistent and include all relevant information, deviations from this model are allowed):

Monographs:

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2011. *Impoliteness. Using Language to Cause Offence*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Journal Articles:

McCardle, Peggy, Judith Cooper & Lisa Freund. 2005. "Language and genetics: Needs and opportunities." In: *Applied Psycholinguistics* 26, 129-135.

Articles in Editions:

Kautzsch, Alexander 2014. "English in Germany. Spreading bilingualism, retreating exonormative orientation and incipient nativization?" In: Sarah Buschfeld, Thomas Hoffmann, Magnus Huber & Alexander Kautzsch (eds). *The Evolution of Englishes: The Dynamic Model and Beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 203-227.

3 Stages of writing a term paper

Writing a linguistic paper involves the following steps:

1. Planning and finding of topic

First of all, you need to find a topic. It is best for you to find a topic yourself rather than to be allocated one because you yourself know best where your interests lie. In order to find a topic, re-read the course materials and ask yourself the following questions:

- What is especially interesting about the topic of the class?
- Which part is most fascinating for me?
- Which parts raise the most questions for me?
- Which is the main question I would like to discuss in my paper?

After you have found your topic, you may want to come to my office hour. I can help you with the stages of reading and focusing your topic and data collection.

2. Reading and focusing your topic

When you have found a topic for your paper, read what has been written about it so far. I can suggest literature to you if you get stuck. Try to formulate your topic precisely, i.e. decide which aspects you need to discuss and which you might leave out. You will then have the central question/hypothesis of your paper.

3. Collecting and analysing data

Your research question determines what kind of data you should collect. I can help you with the technical aspects if needs be.

4. First version

Next you write a first version of your paper according to the structure and styles outlined here. Please remember that your paper needs to have a line of argumentation (think of trying to convince the reader of why research on your topic is interesting and why your study is necessary). Make sure you include only relevant material. Ask yourself with every passage, table and graph: do I need this for my argumentation? If the answer is "No", leave it out.

5. Revision

In revising your paper, you will probably notice flaws in your argumentation, gaps or other things that need to be changed. Also check your spelling! It is a good idea to give a version to one or more friends because they will notice more and other things than you yourself. Another good idea is to read what you have written aloud. Then you will notice awkward formulations and other kinds of errors and understand better how to structure your writing and get new ideas. Double check your bibliographical references!

4 Handing in your paper

Submit your paper in pdf format to the Moodle classroom.

Your paper needs to include the following honour pledge with your signature (with place and date), at the very end of the paper.

I declare that I have read and understood the material exemplifying and explaining cases of plagiarism included in the Studienführer ('Genius borrows nobly': Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism), and that my paper contains no plagiarized material and is solely my own work. I am aware of the fact that should my paper be found to contain plagiarized material or to have been written in part or whole by someone else, this will entail serious consequences. These include the following:

1. The reason for my failure will be recorded by the department.
2. I will not be given credit for the course.
3. The Honour Board may review my paper and suggest additional sanctions, including expulsion.

Furthermore, I am aware that submitting the same or a revised paper in two separate courses without the instructors' explicit consent will result in similar consequences.

5 Grades

As a general rule, Grade 3 means you have followed the preceding instructions and got the facts right, Grade 2 means you have done this and succeeded in placing the question you deal with in its scientific context, Grade 1 means you have done all this and contributed your own constructive criticism and new ideas on the subject. In particular, I will mark the following aspects:

- **Clarity of structure and expression**

I expect logical argumentation, precise discussion and a clearly structured paper.

Please check this in your revision!

- **Scientific treatment of topic**

I expect a correct account of the facts and an awareness of their relevance to the field.

- **Your own ideas**

I mark the originality of your ideas and your discussion and presentation of your results and the literature you have read.

- **Presentation**

I expect a formally correct and clear presentation according to the styles outlined above.

- **Language**

I check whether you have used correct English and good academic style. Your grade may fall by up to a whole grade for language errors. Orthographic errors, too, lead to marking down of the paper.

You will receive a detailed sheet of written feedback once I have read your paper.