

HOW TO WRITE A (LINGUISTIC) TERM PAPER – A DETAILED MANUAL

1. General Requirements

Length of paper

The length of your term paper or report depends on the type of paper and the type of task (report for a seminar, term paper, Bachelor thesis, Master thesis) and on the guidelines of your instructor as well as the general examination regulations.

Deadline

As stated in your application for examination or in agreement with your instructor.

Plagiarism

It is prohibited to use works, ideas or statements of other people without appropriate indication. If you use others' statements in their exact wording you will have to label them as direct quotations and indicate the source in the running text as well as in the list of references. This also holds for all forms of paraphrases and indirect quotations. In case of plagiarism the exam will be treated as **failed** and you will **not** be granted a **second attempt** for this very examination.

You will have to attach a signed declaration of academic integrity to all written tasks.

http://www.anglistik.hhu.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Fakultaeten/Philosophische_Fakultaet/Anglistik_und_Amerikanistik/Dateien/Weitere_Dateien_und_Formulare/Plagiatserklaerung.pdf

Research

The Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek (campus library) provides a useful selection of study material on research skills via ILIAS:

http://ilias.uni-duesseldorf.de/ilias/goto.php?target=lm_216734

2. Requirements Regarding Form and Content

Layout (form)

- cover sheet
- table of contents
- text
- list of references
- appendix

Cover sheet

- title and type of paper
- author information (including matriculation number, address, telephone number and email address)
- course of studies, semester (Anzahl der Fachsemester)
- course title
- semester in which you took the course
- instructor's name
- date of submission

Table of contents

The table of contents should be (consecutively) numbered, i.e., 1, 2, 3; Subsections: 1.1, 1.2, and so on. Please note that subsection 1.1 makes sense only if there also is a subsection 1.2. The numbered sections and their titles should be left-aligned, followed by their respective page numbers, which should be right-aligned. Tables of contents and the general structure of (academic) linguistic publications are always a good model.

Outline of the paper (content)

- introduction
- sections (e.g. theory section, methodology section etc.)
- conclusion
- list of references
- appendix

Issues of content and structure

1. Introduction

Depending on the kind of paper you are writing and the topic of the respective paper, an introduction should contain the following aspects:

Field of study

- Briefly describe the field of study. In which research area is your study located?
- If there are previous studies on your topic, and if these studies relate to your own research you should include them.

Niche of research

- If there is an academic void in your field of study, you should mention it.
- If a research question remained unanswered or open in previous studies, you should take it up.
- If your approach/paper follows a tradition you should mention it.

Objectives

- Introduce your research project.
- Formulate your research questions and objectives.

- Map out the structure of the paper (what will be presented in the second section, in the third one etc.?).

2. Theoretical Background

- Relevant definitions of your object of research should be compared and discussed critically and you should make clear which working definition you are using in your paper (e.g. if you are dealing with compounds you will have to provide a definition of 'compounds' or make clear which of the available definitions you will be working with).
- Any relevant and necessary theoretical notions (N.B. only the ones that are relevant for your topic) should be included, i.e. if you are writing a paper on compounds you should for example talk about the problems of differentiating between compounds and phrases. These problems should be discussed critically rather than merely described.
- It is essential that you then clarify the relevance of these theoretical notions in relation to your research project.
- It is indispensable to indicate the research claims of other scientists in your text. The list of references at the end of your paper should provide details on the used sources. Such claims can be for example introduced as follows:
 - According to Bauer (1983: 35), compounds are...
 - Plag (2003: 43) points out/argues/tests/shows/proves/claims/verifies/falsifies...
 - As early as 1969, Robertson developed...
 - Weinreich (1953), for instance, identifies this kind of second language acquisition as subordinate bilingualism.
 - Thus, According to Muysken (1981: 62), "the combination of the Sp[anish] word *hambre*..."
- It is a prerequisite that you use specialized (linguistic) literature which you can find in: linguistic journals (e.g. *English Language and Linguistics*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, etc.), textbooks (e.g. for a paper in morphology: Plag (2003): *Word-Formation in English* or Katamba (2006): *Morphology*), and linguistic dictionaries (e.g. Bussmann (2006) *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*).
- Any non-academic websites (such as Wikipedia) are not acceptable sources for definitions of linguistic terminology or for an evaluation of the current state of research.

3. Methodology

Data

This section should be dedicated to describing any data you used in detail. This description should cover the following aspects:

- Explain the type and quantity of the data used and elaborate on why you chose this kind of data. (Why did you choose this kind of data?)
- Describe the source of your data (text corpus, questionnaire, interview etc.) and include an explanatory statement. (Why did you choose this source?)
- Description of the data source
 - for corpora/dictionaries as data source:
 - corpus/dictionary should be briefly described/introduced

- for questionnaires as data source:
 - The questionnaire should be introduced. The individual tasks of the questionnaire should be explained and motivated (Why did you choose these tasks?)
 - Give relevant personal details of participants (age, nationality, etc.) – what is relevant may vary depending on the kind of study and the method of data collection.
- Mention problems you had while collecting the data and explain how you dealt with those problems.

Method

The following aspects should be considered here:

- Data analysis: How did you analyze your data? What did you do with the data? According to which aspects/ principles /categories did you classify the data? You should motivate your choices.

Note that it is highly important to give examples of your own data to clarify your procedure of analysis, i.e. while explaining your method of analysis give respective examples from your own data in order to allow for transparency of your methods.

4. Results

- In this section you should present your data in detail using examples for describing and evaluating them. Quantitative results are sometimes best illustrated with tables and figures.
- If you use tables they should be explained and discussed in detail, as well as labeled and consecutively numbered (e.g. Table 1, Figure 4, etc.).

5. Discussion

- In this section the results should be discussed critically with reference to the research question(s), i.e. you should show how your research question(s) can be answered by means of the results of your research project.
- What are the possible implications of your results? Do your findings contribute to the field of study? And if so, how?

6. Conclusion

- You should refer back to the object of research, e.g. “This paper has dealt with the problem...”, “In this paper I have investigated...”
- The main results should be briefly summarized (2 to 3 sentences), e.g. “The results show that...”
- When applicable you should mention implications for future research in the respective field, unanswered or additional and open questions, remaining issues, and the necessity for further research.

7. List of references (see below)

8. Appendix

- The appendix contains a list of the data, questionnaires which were used, and, where necessary, further figures or tables.

3. Formal Requirements

Margins and Page Numbers

For correction marks a left margin of 4.5 cm and a right margin of 3 cm (both in total, i.e. default margin included) are required. The upper and lower margins should measure 2.5 cm each. The pages should be numbered consecutively, starting with the first page of text and ending with the last one (note: cover sheet and table of contents are counted but not numbered).

Font, Font Size and Line Spacing

You should use a 12pt font size and a 1.5 line spacing for normal text. For long quotes use single line spacing. Use a serif font (e.g. Times New Roman).

Examples

Examples within the text are *italicized*, as in:

- “In this text *thingy* indicates that the speaker or author may not remember the proper word for the object they want to name.”
- “Actions and results are more commonly expressed in Early Sranan by nouns in V-N multifunctional sets, as e.g. *plati* ‘to separate/ separation’, *preki* ‘to preach/ sermon’, *sheki* ‘to shake/shaking’.”

If you use more than one example in a row they should be separated from running text and numbered consecutively as shown below:

- (1) a. **This a sample sentence is.*
 b. *This is a sample sentence.*

Footnotes

Footnotes are only to be used to illustrate facts or thoughts which might interrupt the line of argumentation in the running text. Different from literary studies, footnotes are not to be used for bibliographical reference.

Citation methods and bibliographical reference

Short quotations have to be put in quotation marks; quotations exceeding three lines have to be indented, with single spacing but without quotation marks. Bibliographical information – author, year, corresponding page number – has to follow the quotation in brackets, e.g. (Bickerton 1981: 24). This helps to identify the quoted work from your list of references. Use direct quotations sparingly! Bibliographical references in the running text should only include information on author, year of publication and corresponding page number (e.g. Plag (1992: 99) points out...). Please keep in mind that all cited works must be included in your bibliography.

References

The list of references should contain all cited works alphabetically ordered by surname of the author(s)/editor(s). The examples below illustrate a prototypical format for such bibliographic information as found in many linguistic publications. There

are three different types of bibliographical information which differ in format but which are not separated in the list of references: monographs, articles from journals, and articles from collective volumes. The list of references should follow the conventions of the Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics, illustrated in the following. A complete description can be found here:

<http://celxj.org/downloads/USS-NoComments.pdf>

Sample reference entries (following the “Unified style sheet for linguistics”)

Book (authored work):

Chomsky, Noam. 1986. *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin, and use*. New York: Praeger.

Book (edited work):

Gippert, Jost, Nikolaus P. Himmelmann & Ulrike Mosel (eds.). 2006. *Essentials of language documentation* (Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 178). Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Contribution in an edited work:

Heller, Monica. 2001. Gender and public space in a bilingual school. In Aneta Pavlenko, Adrian Blackledge, Ingrid Piller & Marya Teutsch-Dwyer (eds.), *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender* (Language, Power and Social Process 6), 257–282. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

→ **Note: Entries for articles in edited works should always include full bibliographical information for the edited work. Abbreviating the entry (here, e.g., with “In Pavlenko et al., 257–282”) is not acceptable.**

Book also published electronically:

Jefferson, Gail. 2004. Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In Gene H. Lerner (ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation*, 13–23. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. <http://www.liso.ucsb.edu/Jefferson/Transcript.pdf> (accessed 24 June 2008).

→ **Note: Publication date = year of online publication or year of the latest update. The date on which the URL was accessed should be provided in parentheses at the end of the entry.**

Journal article:

Neuman, Yair, Yotam Lurie & Michele Rosenthal. 2001. A watermelon without seeds: A case study in rhetorical rationality. *Text* 21(4). 543–565.

Journal article also published electronically:

Inkelas, Sharon. 2008. The dual theory of reduplication. *Linguistics* 46(2). <http://www.reference-global.com/doi/pdf/10.1515/LING.2008.013> (accessed 10 June 2008).

→ **Note: Publication date = year of online publication or year of the latest update. The date on which the URL was accessed should be provided in parentheses at the end of the entry.**

Special issue of a journal (cited as a whole):

Majid, Asifa & Melissa Bowerman (eds.). 2007. Cutting and breaking events: A crosslinguistic perspective. [Special issue]. *Cognitive Linguistics* 18(2).

Reprint:

Jakobson, Roman & Morris Halle. 2002 [1956]. *Fundamentals of language*, 2nd edn. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Thesis/dissertation:

Jacq, Pascale. 2001. *A description of Jruq (Loven): A Mon-Khmer language of the Lao PDR*. Canberra: Australian National University MA thesis.

Kim, Yong-Jin. 1990. *Register variation in Korean: A corpus-based study*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina dissertation.

Translated title:

Haga, Yasushi. 1998. *Nihongo no Shakai Shinri [Social psychology in the Japanese language]*. Tokyo: Ningen no Kagaku Sha.

→ **Note: The English translation of the title should not be capitalized.**

Paper presented at a meeting or conference:

Sarangi, Srikant & Celia Roberts. 2000. Uptake of discourse research in inter-professional settings: Reporting from medical consultancy. Paper presented at the International Conference on Text and Talk at Work, University of Gent, 16–19 August.

Several works by one author/editor with the same publication date:

Vennemann, Theo. 2000a. From quantity to syllable cuts: On so-called lengthening in the Germanic languages. *Journal of Italian Linguistics/Rivista di Linguistica* 12. 251–282.

Vennemann, Theo. 2000b. Triple-cluster reduction in Germanic: Etymology without sound laws? *Historische Sprachwissenschaft* 113. 239–258

Examples for citation methods, formatting of examples, footnotes, etc.

N.B. The following examples use single line spacing, in your paper you have to use 1.5 line spacing.

suffix (as in *stigma* - *stigmatize*) and even stress may be shifted (as in *cátholic* - *cathólicize*³) or reduced (as in *géntile* - *géntilize*).⁴ The phenomenon with which I will deal here is the truncation of base-final segments if the base word ends in a syllable in which onset and rhyme are identical. The data in (8) illustrate this regular phenomenon.

(8)	*feminize	feminize
	*minimumize	minimize
	*metathesize	metathesize

In her account of these facts, Raffelsiefen (1996) proposes an output-oriented constraint which prohibits identical onsets in adjacent syllables in the derived word: *O_iRO_i. My term 'OCP (onset)' is only a different name for this constraint, which reflects that it is part of a larger family of related constraints. Raffelsiefen's account works for most of the data she presents, but the picture seems to be more complicated. Thus, in my sample of 284 20th century neologisms I have found 6 words that do not feature haplology, contra to Raffelsiefen's predictions. Consider the forms in (9):

(9)	strýchninìze	*strychnize
	clássicìze	*classize
	dilletántìze	*dilletize
	mírrorìze	*mirrize
	pótentìze	*potize
	térrorìze ⁵	*terrize

On closer inspection, the contradictory data reveal a striking regularity, namely that all base words of the forms cited by Raffelsiefen in favour of the constraint are polysyllabic (*emphasize* - *emphasis*, *metathesize* - *metathesis*, *feminize* - *feminine*, *maximize* - *maximum*, etc.), whereas all the counterexamples (except one, *dilletante*, to be discussed shortly) are disyllabic. At first sight the constraint appears to be sensitive to the number of syllables. However, the violators and conformers also differ in the stress pattern. Thus, the base words of the haplological forms all have antepenultimate stress with two unstressed syllables following, i.e. they are dactyls, while all violators do not exhibit a stress lapse. That this stress-based description is superior to the simple counting of syllables is corroborated by the behavior of *dilletántìze*, whose base word has main stress on the final syllable (which all the other polysyllabic forms cited lack). In sum, the operation of OCP (onset) needs to be restricted to those cases in which a base with two unstressed syllables precedes *-ize*. By way of illustration, a form like **fémininìze* exhibits a stress lapse, which would only be tolerable if the last two onsets were not identical. Since they are identical,

³ Following established conventions, I use acute accent to indicate primary stress, grave accent to indicate secondary stress.

⁴ See Plag (1997: chapter 7.2) for a comprehensive account of the stem allomorphy of *-ize* derivatives.

⁵ Raffelsiefen considers *terrorize* a French borrowing. According to the *OED* this is incorrect. Semantically, this word is also completely regular (see Plag 1997, in press for a detailed account of the semantics of *-ize* derivatives).