

How to write a term-paper in linguistics

Text and format

Your text must adhere to the standard linguistic notation conventions (see separate handout). Careful proof-reading and checking of language and all formalities is absolutely necessary. If your paper shows too many formal inadequacies (this means the form of your written English, too!), it will not be accepted. The main text of a term paper should consist of approximately 10 pages¹.

DIN A4, 12 point font size, 1.5 spaced

left margin: 2.5 cm

right margin: 4 cm

top margin: 2 cm

bottom margin: 2.5 cm

page numbers (**no page numbers on cover sheet and table of contents; page count starts only with the first page of your main text, i.e. usually with the introduction**)

Structure

- **Cover sheet** (name of institution, seminar details; paper title; your name, e-mail and postal address, course of subjects, number of terms you have been studying, your subjects)
- **Table of Contents**

Abstract (a short informational text [100-200 wds.] that captures the essence of your paper, i.e. what you did, why and how you did it: methodology results/findings, conclusion and recommendations; it should help the reader to quickly ascertain the purpose, content and usefulness of the paper)

1. **Introduction** (central problem, wider (seminar) context and research question(s), i.e. what you want to find out)
2. **Previous research**/literature survey (brief overview of the state-of-the-art, i.e. the "Forschungsstand", i.e. what other linguists have found out and written about the topic)

If your paper includes a short empirical study:

3. **Methodology** (the data you used, how you collected, filtered and analysed the data)
4. **Results** (quantitative and qualitative presentation and analysis of your results)
5. **Discussion of results** (critical discussion of the results with the respect to the initially formulated research questions)
6. **Conclusion** (summary, criticism, problems you encountered, suggestions for further research)

¹ This count refers to your own text, i.e. **excluding** all front and back matter (cover sheet, table of contents and reference list) as well as extensive appendices.

- **References** (i.e. the research literature you have used)
- **Appendices** (large tables or figures which cannot be placed within the main text, if any)

Referencing

In linguistics, references are given **in the text, not as foot- or endnotes**. Footnotes are only used for additional information that does not fit into the context of your argument. Use only the name of the author you are quoting or referring to, the year of publication of the respective book or article, and the page number(s). The work you are quoting or referring to can then be easily identified in the bibliography.

Examples:

Due to the fact that the structures to be tested are not highly frequent in written or spoken English, let alone in learner language, procedures of low explicitness, e.g. unstructured interviews or spontaneous conversation, will not provide data rich enough for our purposes (see Nunan 1992: 137).

Schmidt (1924: 4) claims that ...

Direct quotes are indicated by quotation marks and are also given in the text:

It has been argued that successful second language acquisition research needs to gather "as much information as possible about this complex piece of human behavior" (Tarone 1994: 335).

Examples, data sets, given in the text are numbered separately throughout the paper:

- (1) This problem we will examine in chapter 5.
- (2) Her father I like but her mother I can't stand.
- (3) I had two really good friends. Damon and Jimmy their names were.
- (4) It was necessary to pass if I was to stay at Oxford, and pass I did.

Tables or graphs/figures are also numbered separately and need a table/figure caption:

MAIN VERB	NUMBER OF OCCURENCES IN 1124 TOKENS OVERALL
<i>come</i>	204
<i>stand</i>	121
<i>lie</i>	110
<i>hang</i>	46
<i>sit</i>	41
<i>go</i>	33
<i>grow</i>	24
<i>rise</i>	23
<i>appear</i>	22
<i>live</i>	19
total	643 = 57%

Table 1: Non-*be* main verbs appearing in inversions (Birner 1995)

Bibliography (in linguistics usually called 'References')

Follow the standards used in the seminar bibliography. If there is more than one publication of the same author in a particular year, please use small letters following the year of publication to identify the respective work in the bibliography (e.g. Lieber 1992a, Lieber 1992b). Most importantly, you should follow one style consistently. **Do not mix different styles in one document!**

Examples:

a) books

Bauer, Laurie (2001), *Morphological Productivity*. Cambridge: CUP.

Booij, Gert, ed. (2000), *Morphologie: ein internationales Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Dressler, Wolfgang, Willi Mayerthaler, Oswald Panagl & Wolfgang Wurzel (1987), *Leitmotifs in Natural Morphology*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

b) journal articles

Bybee, Joan & Carol Lynn Moder (1983), "Morphological classes as natural categories", *Language* 59, 251-270.

Lieber, Rochelle (1992), "Compounding in English", *Rivista di Linguistica* 4:1, 79-96.

c) articles in edited volumes

Plag, Ingo (2000), "Irregular past tense formation in English interlanguage", in Ingo Plag & Klaus P. Schneider (eds.), *Language Use, Language Acquisition and Language History. (Mostly) Empirical Studies in Honour of Rüdiger Zimmermann*. Trier: WVT, 134-149.

d) internet (re)sources

To quote files available on the WWW, give

- the author's name (last name first) or the name of the publishing institution (if known)
- the full title of the page "in quotation marks"
- the title of the complete work (if applicable) *in italics*
- the full URL <in angular brackets> and the date of access in parentheses:

Examples:

Quinion, Michael. "CYBERPLAGUE. Help! A prefix out of control!", *World Wide Words. Investigating international English from a British viewpoint*, <<http://www.worldwidewords.org/articles/cyber.htm>> (09 July 2002).

Walker, Janice & Todd Taylor. *The Columbia Guide to Online Style*, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html> (09 July 2002).

Research and Development Unit for English Studies, University of Liverpool. *WebCorp: The Web as Corpus*, <<http://www.webcorp.org.uk/>> (09 July 2002).

New Words in English, <<http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~ling215/NewWords/index.html>> (09 July 2002).

Reference Guide to the SARA Windows Client, <<http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk/bnc/getting/chap4.htm>> (09 July 2002).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft of other people's words and ideas, i.e. when you deliberately or accidentally claim that an idea or the expression of it is yours when it is actually taken from the work by someone else². For more information, you should read the information provided by the *Studienkommission*: <http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/anglistik/sk/plagiat.aspx>

To avoid and possibly sanction cases of plagiarism, FB 10 has decided on the following regulation: Every student needs to include the following written and signed statement when submitting a term paper:

Erklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorgelegte Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und nur die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Wörtlich oder dem Sinn nach aus anderen Werken entnommene Stellen sind unter Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht.

Mir ist folgendes bekannt: Die ungekennzeichnete Übernahme von fremden Texten gilt als schwerer Verstoß gegen das Urheberrecht sowie gegen die Ethik wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens (Respekt vor der Leistung anderer). Dies gilt nicht zuletzt für Quellen aus dem Internet, die mindestens mit Autor (soweit recherchierbar), Titel (sofern vorhanden), Adresse und Recherchedatum auszuweisen sind.

Ein festgestellter Täuschungsversuch führt zum Nichtbestehen der Prüfung bzw. zur Nichtanerkennung des Leistungsnachweises. Die betreffende Prüfungsleistung gilt als mit „nicht ausreichend“ bewertet, § 12 (3) Magister PO und § 10 Lehramt PO sowie § 12 (3 + 4) AT BPO und AT MPO. Das Dekanat behält sich darüber hinaus vor, ggf. juristische Schritte einzuleiten, z. B. eine Anzeige wegen Verstoßes gegen das Urheberrecht.

A form can be downloaded from

<http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/service/formulare/pdf/Plagiat-Erkl%C3%A4rung.pdf>

Submission

Obviously, your paper needs to be submitted within the set time limit. According to current exam regulations ("Prüfungsordnung"), you need to hand in a hard copy (print-out) and an electronic file (.pdf or .doc/.docx) by e-mail.

² For more detailed information on plagiarism and how to avoid it see chapter 22 in Wray, Alison et al. (1998), *Projects in Linguistics. A Practical Guide to Researching Language*. London: Arnold.