

Linguistic Style Sheet

to be used for writing term papers and theses in English Linguistics

(Please read this style sheet carefully before you start writing your paper or thesis and once again before you hand it in)

1. General

A term paper is a scholarly piece of work and has to meet the general requirements of academic writing. Theses include amongst others:

1. **neutral style:** hence, phrases such as "I believe" or "in my opinion" have no place in scholarly papers;
2. **verifiability:** allow the reader to check your statements by giving references;
3. **precision:** state facts, argue your point, and do not ramble just to fill pages; and
4. **originality:** try to be different: even a student's paper should be, and will be evaluated as, a small scholarly contribution.

Any paper will be based on ideas presented by other scholars, which usually serve as the starting-point for developing and justifying your approach. A mere collection of quotations, however, won't do as a scholarly paper. The highest premium is put on research which provides new findings, gives new insights and thus contributes to our understanding of the nature of language.

2. Title of the paper

The title of a paper serves to give the reader as much information on its topic as possible. Subtitles often help to specify particular aspects chosen for your topic. Such a title might read: "The use of prepositions in the construal of emotions: why do we *say fed up with* but *sick and tired of*?" The title chosen for your paper defines and delimits its content. Any statement made in the paper should be in relation to the title. Ideas which only marginally touch upon the topic but which you think are too good to be left out might be put in a footnote.

3. Structure and content of the paper

Any paper must have an overall structure. Structuring a paper helps you in developing and presenting your ideas more clearly and, just as importantly, guides the reader in reconstructing your thoughts. Any paper will at least contain the following sections: an introduction, a review of the relevant research, a main part, and a conclusion.

The **introduction** serves the following purposes: it delimits the topic and formulates the goal of the paper. The reader has to be informed from the very beginning about the subject matter of the paper. The choice of the topic should be as narrow as possible so that a precise and in-depth treatment of the topic is feasible. Be modest in your claims; nobody expects you to be an Einstein. Second, briefly correlate your work with the pertinent research: Why should the reader be interested in your paper? Do not justify the choice of your topic by giving trivial statements such

as "the bare infinitive has attracted so much linguistic interest in the last years." Third, the method which you have chosen to test your hypotheses should be described in short. Finally, it is advisable to outline the structure of the paper, providing a sort of "red thread" through the main part.

The introduction is followed by a state-of-the-art **survey of the relevant research** done in this field (journal articles!). Any piece of research is based on work done by other scholars. The survey of research allows you to find your niche and develop your own theories and hypotheses. Stick to the pertinent research which you want relate your findings to in the discussion part, and do not simply summarize handbook articles or textbook chapters which are only broadly connected to your topic.

The **main part** of your paper is devoted to the presentation of your own work. Your task is to present the work you have done so that the informed reader is able to understand it. You should use linguistic terminology, though not to impress with technical jargon. Make sure you understand the terms you are using, and, if necessary, define important terminology, either by quoting sources or by providing your own definitions. The main part is subdivided into three parts:¹

- First, you explain and justify the **methodology** you have chosen to test your hypotheses. In an empirical work, you might, for example, use informants, interviews, questionnaires or corpora. The sources of the material used have to be given.
- This section is followed by the **presentation and analysis** of your findings where you summarize the results in tables and/or graphs. It is highly advisable to illustrate your points by giving linguistic examples wherever possible, not least because linguistic research has to do with language.
- In the **theoretical discussion**, you relate the findings described in the previous section to current research and your own ideas presented in the introduction. The results may or may not be in conformity with your working hypotheses. The latter does not mean that "nothing has come out of your work," but it just means that your hypotheses have to be revised, which is just as good a result. Always state your arguments clearly and present facts and evidence.

The **conclusion** may provide a brief summary of the main results, but, importantly, you should focus on how your work makes a contribution to previous research: Describe possible shortcomings of your study and suggest how these could be overcome in future research. Avoid meaningless statements such as "More research needs to be done in the future.", but rather specify challenging problems and conceivable new approaches.

4. Form of the paper

There are certain formal conventions of scholarly writing which you will have to familiarize yourself with as soon as possible. Some of the conventions used in linguistics are different from those used in literary criticism. The most important style sheet conventions are the following:

The **front page** contains the title of the paper, your name, address, e-mail, telephone number etc. and the course it is written for. It is followed by a page listing the **contents**, i.e. the section headings and their page numbers as illustrated in the following example:

¹ These are recommendations for quantitative linguistic papers; if your work is based on qualitative data you might need to organize the main part differently.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The English relative clause in recent investigations	2
3. Methodology	4
4. Presentation and analysis of the results	6
4.1. The restrictive relative clause	6
4.2. The non-restrictive relative clause	8
5. Theoretical discussion	10
6. Conclusion	13
References	14
Appendix	15

The number of the section and the **headings** will of course also reappear in the body of the text at the beginning of each section.

Footnotes are reserved for additional information which would lead the reader astray if given in the main part of the text. They are numbered consecutively throughout the text and placed at the bottom of the page, indicated by a superscript.²

References are alphabetically listed at the end of the body of the text. There is no scholarly paper that does not have at least some bibliographical references. All authors that are cited in the text have to be listed as references. In linguistic papers, no distinction is made between primary and secondary sources.

There are standardized international rules on how to list books and articles. Do not use your own system but follow these conventions. For any book or article, first list the (first) author's last name, his first name(s) and the year of publication. If there is more than one author, list them all (up to three). If there is more than one publication by the same author in the same year, the letters a, b, c may be used following the year (e.g., 1996a). If the reference item is a book, write the title of the book in italics followed by the place of publication and the publisher. If the reference item is an article printed in a journal, write the title of the article in double quotation marks followed by the name of the journal in italics, the volume of the journal and, after a colon, the page numbers (without "pp."). If the article appeared in an edited volume, write the title of the article in double quotation marks (as above) followed by "In:" and the name(s) of the editor(s) of the volume, their marking as "(ed.)" or "(eds.)", the title of the work in italics, the place of publication, the publisher and "pp." plus page numbers. Use the following references as a model:

- Book:** Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.
- Journal:** Sacks, Harvey, Emanuel Schegloff & Gail Jefferson. 1974. "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation." *Language* 50: 696-735.
- Edited volume:** Rosch, Eleanor. 1978. "Principles of categorization." In: Rosch, Eleanor & Barbara Lloyd (eds.). *Cognition and Categorization*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 27-48.

An **appendix** may be used to specify important background information to your study such as the linguistic data used for your analysis or the questionnaire developed for your investigation.

5. Linguistic conventions

Due to the subject matter of linguistics, conventions on representing various aspects of language play a very important role in linguistic papers. Note the following conventions.

- The use of **italics** has very specific functions. It is used to
 - a) indicate expressions in a foreign language, e.g., "Frege distinguished between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*;"
 - b) indicate reference to words or expressions, e.g., "The polysemy of the word *bank*;"
 - c) draw attention to the first mention of significant terms;
 - d) mark titles of books and journals (see above).
- The use of **single quotation marks** is exclusively restricted to giving meaning of expressions in the running text, e.g., cogito 'I think'.
- The use of **double quotation marks** is restricted to
 - a) direct quotations, e.g., Lakoff (1987:68) states that "we organize our knowledge by means of structures called *idealized cognitive models*, or ICMs;"
 - b) mark titles of articles in journals and edited volumes (see above).

In linguistic writing, reference to quotation and literature in general is made by naming the author together with the year of publication and the page number as in Lakoff (1987:68). This way you can avoid writing dozens of clumsy footnotes. In direct quotation, changes or omissions from the original text are indicated by square brackets.

- The use of **slashes** indicates phonemes or phonological transcriptions, e.g., *park* /pa:k/.
- The use of **square brackets** indicates (allo)phones or phonetic transcriptions, e.g., [p^ha:k].
- **Linguistic examples**, in particular sentences, are numbered consecutively in the text, e.g.,
 - (1) a. There goes the pain in my knee.
 - b. There goes my knee.
 - (2) a. Here comes the pain in my knee.
 - b. *Here comes my knee.

Ungrammatical sentences like the one under (2b) are starred, doubtful ones may be indicated by a question mark.

6. What else to observe

Quality is more important than quantity, i.e., the number of pages. The quality of a paper is judged both on the basis of its contents and its scholarly presentation as outlined above.

In order to improve your writing skills in English, you should take the opportunity and write your term papers in **English**. Make sure, however, that your use of English is correct and linguistically appropriate. No matter which language you prefer, always use the automatic spellchecker, double-check punctuation and grammatical correctness, in other words: proofread your paper!

Finally, it has become necessary for students to explicitly state that the submitted paper is a work of their own. To this end, you have to print, read and sign the *Eidesstattliche Versicherung* (affidavit) available on the IAA homepage. The signed declaration is part of the paper, either directly following the title page or enclosed as the final page.

For further information you may want to look at www.uni-hamburg.de/iaa/Hausarbeiten.html

² If you prefer endnotes, you need to list them at the end of the paper before the references.