Term Paper Guidelines

These guidelines contain information on:

1) Structure of a term paper in linguistics  
2) Styles for term papers in linguistics  
3) Stages of writing a term paper  
4) Support  
5) Handing in your paper  
6) Grades

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 (by the way - 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

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

- **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 a combined section or two 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 five references to research articles or monographs, a paper for a Hauptseminar at least eight. Use only scholarly sources, be they printed or from the Internet.

- **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 scientific community of the relevance, and innovative value of your results. 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 10-12 pages long, in a Hauptseminar 15-20 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. Try to avoid first and second person pronouns if possible.

  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". You may check 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 Constrastive Linguistics
  Lecturer: Dr. Sandra Mollin
  SS 2010

  Pronunciation Errors of German Learners of English:
  A Case Study

  Anna Mustermann
  Heugasse 1
  69117 Heidelberg
  anna_mustermann@web.de
  submitted 01.09.2010
• **Tables and graphs** in the text are numbered and contain a short caption. Example: *Table 4. Number of students taking linguistics exams from 1980 to 1999.*

• **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 (1995: 322) 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, minor deviations from this model are allowed):

  **Monographs:**
  

  **Journal Articles:**
  

  **Articles in Editions:**
  
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 course?
   - 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 the topic so far. I can suggest literature to you if you like. Try to formulate your topic precisely, i.e. decide which aspects you should discuss and which you might leave out. You will then have the central question/hypothesis of your paper.

3. Collecting data

   Your hypothesis 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  **Support**

Writing a term paper is a skill that needs to be learned. Term papers are your chance to practice writing before you write your final thesis. So please make use of the support that is offered for writing term papers, by myself and especially by the Anglistisches Seminar’s excellent Writing Centre staff. Some more detailed information on the formalia of writing a term paper is also available in the Studienführer <http://bigapple.as.uni-heidelberg.de/Studienfuehrer>. If you experience trouble at any stage please come and see me or contact me by e-mail.

5  **Handing in your paper**

Hand in your paper in electronic format, either as a word document (.doc or .docx) or as a pdf file (.pdf). Send this paper in by e-mail to sandra.mollin@as.uni-heidelberg.de.

At the same time (or a few days later), drop a sheet into my pigeon-hole (or send by post) that is headed with your name, the title of your term paper and the seminar you wrote it for. Below print the following honour pledge, and provide your signature (with place and date).

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.

6 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 are not tolerated and may result in the paper being rejected or in your paper being marked down.

You will receive a detailed sheet of written feedback when you get your paper back and you are welcome to more detailed feedback in person.