

# Academic Writing in Languages and Linguistics

You are planning to write a Hausarbeit in one of the Linguistics courses this term? The linguistics teachers will give you as much support as possible. Here are some hints on what to expect from us and what we expect from you.

## 1) Structure

### 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

A linguistic paper is, in informal terms, about 50% "theory" and 50% "practice" (see "Empirical paper" below). The theoretical part gives the background of the paper, an accurate formulation of the problem and appropriate methods for solving it, contains a discussion of the 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.

### Empirical part

First, you describe your data collection and analysis (Participants, Method, Analysis), then you present your results.

### 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.

### References

In the references you list all works cited in your paper according to the styles listed below.

### Appendix

You may have extensive corpus data, tables of results, and so on. These belong in an appendix. For some kinds of paper you may also wish to include a floppy disk or a CD-ROM.

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

## 2) Language

Scientific English is quite a different register from spoken English. Please make sure you use appropriate expressions and vocabulary. Avoid first and second person pronouns - you are not writing to a pen-friend or expressing a simple opinion but carefully formulating results which are intended to be more generally valid.

### 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". Again, check linguistic papers in Journals to get a feeling for the style!

## 3) Styles

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 obviously in your own interest, too).

Please make sure you follow these conventions in your paper. You will find standard examples of how to format a linguistics paper in linguistic periodicals such as *Journal of Linguistics*, *Language in Society*, *Linguistics*.

Format your paper neatly with a standard formatting system such as OpenOffice, Word or LaTeX, using appropriately defined document styles (e.g. Heading 1, Heading 2, ...) and text objects (lists and tables instead of tabs).

### Titlepage

### Tables and Graphs

in the text are numbered and contain some explanation. Example: Table 4. Number of students taking linguistics exams from 1980 to 1999. Table captions are given above the table, graph captions below the graph.

### References in the text ...

? are given in short form (author's name, year of publication:page) and NOT with a footnote  
Example: As Muller (1995:322) pointed out ... Distinguish clearly between what you find in the literature and your own contribution.

### References in the bibliography ...

have the following style

- **articles:**  
Author's surname, initial. (Year). "Titel of article". Name of Journal Number of Issue, page



Next you write a first version of your paper according to the structure and styles outlined here. You can hand in parts of the first version for feedback if you want.

## 5. Revision

- Even if you did not hand in the first version you will have to revise your paper. You will probably notice flaws in your argumentation, gaps or other things that need to be revised.
- Also check your spelling please! It is a good idea to give a version to a friend because they will notice more and other things than you yourself.
- Another good idea is to read what you have written aloud to someone else. 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!
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## 6. Submission

Only after revision submit your paper and have a rest.

## 5) Support

Writing a Hausarbeit is a skill that needs to be learned. Hausarbeiten are your chance to practice writing before you write your Masters thesis or Staatsexamensarbeit, which will determine much of your final grade. So please make use of the support we offer for writing Hausarbeiten. In detail we will help you with

- reading suggestions and cutting down your topic/hypothesis
- suggestions for data collection and analysis
- feedback for (parts of) the first version
- feedback and grade for the final version

If you experience trouble at any stage please come and see us or contact us by email.

Furthermore, the Schreiblabor regularly offers courses and advice.

Email: [schreiblabor@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:schreiblabor@uni-bielefeld.de)

## 6) Grades

As a general principle

**Grade 3 means** you have followed the following 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 we mark the following aspects

**Clarity of structure and expression** We expect logical argumentation, precise discussion and a clearly structured paper. Please check this in your revision!

**Scientific treatment of topic** We expect a correct account of the facts and an awareness of their relevance to the field.

**Your own ideas** We mark the originality of your ideas and your discussion and presentation of your results and the literature you read.

**Presentation** We expect a formally correct clear presentation according to the styles outlined above.

We will discuss your grade with you in detail and give you suggestions on how (if) your next papers can be improved.