

# English Linguistics: *Style Guide for Seminar Papers*

*“Simplicity of form is never a poverty. It is a great virtue.”  
(Jan Tschichold)*

## 1. Formal conventions

### Length

Although by no means the most important issue when it comes to seminar papers, the question about the length of the work is often the first one asked. Depending on the degree course and the type of seminar, your paper should roughly have the following length:

Seminar Papers	words	pages	Final Theses	words	pages
Aufbaumodul B.A., Lehrämter	3000–4000	10–12	BA-Arbeit	8000–10000	26–33
Vertiefungsmodul B.A.	3500–4500	13–15	Zulassungsarbeit Lehramt nicht vertieft	12000–18000	40–60
Mastermodul, Vertiefungsmodul Lehramt Gymnasium	4500–6000	15–20	Zulassungsarbeit Lehramt Gymnasium MA-Arbeit	18000–24000 15000–21000	60–80 50–70

Table 1: Length

At the end of your term paper you should provide the exact number of words. Word processors can usually do an automatic word count for you. Title page, table of contents, the bibliography and appendices should be excluded from the word count.

### Before you start

Before you actually start writing, you should familiarize yourself with the tools you are using. Modern word processors like *Microsoft Word* or *OpenOffice Writer* (and also typesetting tools like *LaTeX*) offer a multitude of functions that can assist you. Instead of setting formats like the typeface or the space between paragraphs by hand, you should make use of formatting styles (*Formatvorlagen*), which will not only ensure a consistent layout of your paper but also make it possible to generate the table of contents automatically. Once set up, you can re-use your formatting styles for all future papers (and with small changes also for papers in other subjects).

Nicol & Albrecht (2002, 2007, 2010) and Schunk (2009) provide in-depth information on how to make full use of *Microsoft Word* and *LaTeX* respectively.

In order for your spell checker to work correctly, do not forget to set the language of your document to the language you actually use, e.g. *“Englisch (Großbritannien)”*.

A backup strategy is also something you might want to consider before you begin writing. As convenient as saving everything to the local hard drive and additionally to a USB device may be, it

is not really a backup. Save incrementally to at least two different external media so that you have at least one working copy in case something goes wrong. An online backup, for example to your student folder<sup>1</sup> on the university's file server, is a good alternative. For final theses a versioning system like *Subversion* can save you a lot of work.

## Title page

The first page of your paper is the title page, which provides the following pieces of information:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Top part of the page:     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg</li> <li>• Lehrstuhl für Englische Sprachwissenschaft einschließlich Sprachgeschichte</li> <li>• type and title of seminar</li> <li>• module (<i>Modulzuordnung</i>) and ECTS points</li> <li>• name of the university teacher (with academic titles)</li> <li>• semester</li> </ul>                  |
| Central part of the page: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title of the seminar paper</li> </ul>  |
| Bottom part of the page:  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your name</li> <li>• your matriculation number (<i>Matrikelnummer</i>)</li> <li>• your subjects studied (with semester number) and course of study (e.g. <i>Lehramt Gymnasium</i>)</li> <li>• your postal address</li> <li>• your telephone number</li> <li>• your email address</li> <li>• the date of handing in your paper</li> </ul> |

<p>Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg          Lehrstuhl für Englische Sprachwissenschaft einschließlich Sprachgeschichte          Hauptseminar: Absolutely fabulous aspects of the English language          Vertiefungsmodul (8 ECTS)          Dozent: Dr. John Sinclair jr.          Wintersemester 2003/2004</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>We are being different:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The use of the progressive aspect in British and American English</p> <p>Jane Doe          Matrikelnummer: 4815162342          Englisch (4) / Geschichte (4), Lehramt Gymnasium          Große Britenstraße 15b, 96047 Bamberg          Telefon: (0 951) 555-1516          E-Mail: <a href="mailto:jane@doe.com">jane@doe.com</a></p> <p>23. April 2004</p>
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Figure 1: Title page

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.uni-bamberg.de/rz/server/fileserver/studierende/> for details.

The title page is not numbered. An example is shown in Figure 1.

### **Page layout**

The page size of your paper should be A4 (portrait), printed on one side only. Leave ample margins for comments and corrections (left and right at least 3 cm, top and bottom about 2.5 cm). Only serif fonts with a good legibility (e.g. *Cambria*, *Century Schoolbook* or *Times New Roman*) sized 11 to 12 points are suitable for your running text. Do not mix different typefaces in your paper.

The line spacing (*Zeilenabstand*) of your running text should be set to 1.5. Footnotes, longer quotations and bibliography (see below) should be single-spaced.

Your text should be justified on both sides (*Blocksatz*) and paragraphs should either have their first lines indented or have a small space of about 10 points between them. If you choose to indent the paragraphs, make sure that the first paragraph after a headline does not have such an indentation.

Each page (except for the title page and the table of contents) should have a page number. Note that in seminar papers and final theses new chapters generally do not begin on a new page. Only the references section and the appendix are preceded by a page break (*Seitenumbruch*).

### **Numbering**

Please use Arabic numerals for your headings (e.g. 2.3.4.). If you think you need more than four levels (e.g. 2.3.4.2.8.), you should consider revising the outline of your paper. A subsection should contain more than one idea expressed in a single paragraph. Each lower level should at least consist of two headings. Note that the references section and (optional) appendices are usually not numbered. A suggestion as to what the table of contents should look like can be found in Figure 2.

<b>Contents</b>	
1. Introduction .....	1
2. The progressive aspect in Standard English grammar .....	3
3. Methodology.....	5
4. Results and Discussion.....	6
4.1. The progressive aspect in American English .....	6
4.1.1. Written .....	6
4.1.2. Spoken.....	8
4.1.3. Non-standard dialects.....	9
4.2. The progressive aspect in British English .....	10
4.2.1. Written .....	10
4.2.2. Spoken.....	11
4.2.3. Non-standard dialects.....	13
5. Conclusion .....	14
References.....	16

Figure 2: Table of Contents

## Typography

### ***Italics and underlining***

Italics are usually used to highlight words you want to emphasize, indicate titles of books and foreign words or phrases. In linguistics they are also used to mark letters, words or sentences you present as linguistic evidence:

The word *cousin* still has the meaning ‘relative’ in Shakespeare’s *What You Will*.

Remember that only titles of independent works, i.e. monographs, collections and journals, are italicised. Titles of journal articles, book chapters and the like must not be set in italics. Do not overuse italics for emphasizing words. Syntactic and lexical means are often more suitable to express emphasis.

If you have to italicise something within a stretch of italics, the type is normally switched back to roman type. Parentheses and brackets around italicized text should also be set in italics.

Some older style guides still suggest using underlining instead of italics. This goes back to the era of typewriters, which often could not produce italics. As you will not be using a typewriter to produce your paper, there is absolutely no need for you to underline anything in your paper.

### ***Linguistic examples***

Linguistic examples should be numbered consecutively throughout your paper and may be referred to in the text by means of these numbers. Related examples can be subsumed under the

same number and distinguished by adding a letter (e.g. (4) *a.*). Ungrammatical examples are marked by a small asterisk (\*).

Example (15) illustrates the basic type. Alternative structures involving subject-to-object raising and subject-to-subject raising are given in examples (16a) and (16b), respectively. Example (16c) is ungrammatical.

- (15) The authorities believe that the IRA planted the bomb.
- (16) a. The authorities believed the IRA to have planted the bomb.  
 b. The IRA was believed by the authorities to have planted the bomb.  
 c. \*By the authorities it was believed the IRA to have planted the bomb.

It is easy to create a formatting style (*Formatvorlage*) for your examples, so that you do not have to keep track of numbering yourself. This will also enable the cross-referencing function of your word processor.

### **Quotation marks, apostrophes, hyphens and dashes**

Please use typographically correct quotation marks in your paper. Opening and closing quotation marks in English look like a tiny 6 and a tiny 9 respectively (‘...’, “...”). Do not use the inch sign (") as a replacement for quotation marks.

Double quotation marks are used for shorter quotations (see below) and titles of journal articles or book chapters. Single quotation marks are used for meanings, definitions and quotations within quotations.

The Old English verb *sellan* had the general meaning of ‘give’; Middle English *sellan*, however, was narrowed to ‘sell’, that is, ‘give for money’.

Never use quotation marks for emphasis. A reader of your paper is likely to interpret this usage as irony.

The apostrophe (') looks like a closing single quotation mark. On a German standard keyboard it is found on the same key as the hash or pound sign (#). Please do not use accents (´ or `) as replacement for the apostrophe.

You should also distinguish between hyphens (-) and dashes (–). While hyphens are used to join words or syllables (e.g. *twenty-three*), dashes indicate parenthetical expressions – such as this one – and are also used for ranges of numerical values (e.g. *pages 15–23*). Dashes used in parenthetical expressions are surrounded by spaces, those indicating a range are not.

For more punctuation joy consult Trask (1997).

### **IPA characters**

If you need to include IPA symbols, make sure to use an appropriate Unicode font that roughly matches the look of your running text. SIL International offers two widely used typefaces (*Doulos*

*SIL* and *Charis SIL*)<sup>2</sup> that provide well designed IPA symbols free of charge. Do not forget to enclose phonemic transcriptions in slashes /.../ and phonetic transcriptions in square brackets [...]. The *IPA Character Picker* (Ishida 2010) is a helpful on-line tool for selecting the appropriate IPA symbols.

### **Tables and figures**

Sometimes it is necessary to include tables or figures in your paper. But do not forget that they do not speak for themselves. Each instance should be labelled, e.g. “Table 1: Progressive aspect in American English”.

### **Proofreading**

Do not forget to thoroughly proofread your paper, or even better, have someone else proofread it for you – ideally a native speaker. Although spellcheckers have become quite good at what they do, they will never find all mistakes.

Make sure not to leave any notes and comments only intended for yourself in the final version of the paper. Come up with a consistent scheme for marking such comments (e.g. colour-coding or special characters) and search for these marks before handing in your paper.

Even a well-researched paper will appear sloppy and amateurish if sprinkled with typos and grammar mistakes and will therefore annoy your supervisor. No written work is ever completely error-free but you should make an effort to come as close to that ideal as you can.

## **2. Content**

### **General elements**

Consider your paper to be a little book. An academic paper always consists of these parts in this order: a title page, a table of contents, an introduction, the main part, a conclusion and finally an alphabetical list of the references you used. In some cases you might need to add an appendix, which is usually the very last part of your paper. Figure 3 gives an overview of an empirical paper’s structure.

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<sup>2</sup> Charis SIL: [http://scripts.sil.org/CharisSIL\\_download](http://scripts.sil.org/CharisSIL_download), Doulos SIL: [http://scripts.sil.org/DoulosSIL\\_download](http://scripts.sil.org/DoulosSIL_download)

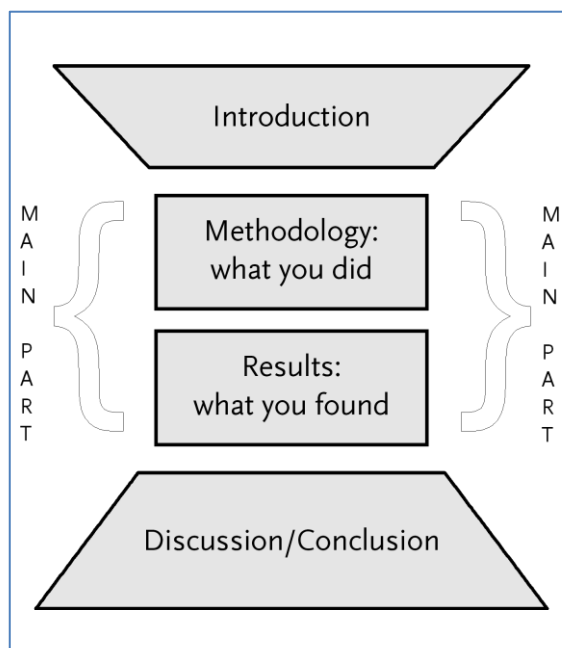


Figure 3: Typical structure of an empirical paper

## **Introduction**

Every academic paper has an introduction. Its function is to guide the reader to the topic of the paper and give a brief outlook on what you are going to discuss and in which way you approach the topic. The introduction always includes the following:

- What is the main leading question you are going to answer in your paper? You should be able to summarise this question in one sentence.
- Which specific aspect(s) of your topic are you going to discuss?
- What is relevant and new in your approach to the topic, i.e. what is the problem that justifies or prompts your leading question?
- What is your approach to answer this question? Outline shortly the main chapters of your paper and your line of argument.

In addition to these, the introduction can also include:

- reasons why you have chosen that particular perspective on the topic
- the method you are going to use, e.g. where your data come from

## **Main chapters**

The structure and content of the main part of your paper depends, of course, on your topic, but when your work is based on empirical data it will usually consist of a section about the methodology you used and one in which you present and discuss the results. The discussion of the results may also take place in the conclusion, but methodology and results are always part of the central chapters of your paper.

Here are some guidelines as to what to include in the main chapters of your paper:

- *Discuss relevant previous research on your topic, focussing on up-to-date material.* Filter what is relevant to answering your leading research question. Quote the most important pieces of information, summarise different authors' arguments and express

your own well-founded thoughts on them. Find inconsistencies and contradictions in the authors' arguments, and be critical with regard to what they claim (e.g. based on unconvincing evidence, logical gaps in their line of argument, too few data etc.). Order all these aspects into a coherent line of argument that your reader can follow.

- *Be coherent.*  
Make sure there is a logical link between paragraphs and chapters so that each follows logically from the previous one; use conjuncts such as *therefore, moreover, on the other hand*, etc.
- *Do not let data and quotations speak for themselves.*  
Both are only the means that help you to prove your point, so tell your reader to what extent they support your hypothesis and which conclusions you draw from them.
- *Chapter headings should always give an indication of your line of argument.*  
Do not use "Chapter 1" or "Main Part" and avoid using the title of your whole paper as a heading of a chapter: The title of the paper covers the complete work and not only one part of it. Chapter headings are short and precise; "precise" means that they should not promise more or less than you actually deal with in the chapter, i.e. they should not be too general or cover only one aspect of what follows.
- *Be concise.*  
Discuss only what is relevant to your leading question(s) and do not get side-tracked by matters like biographical information about a linguist or funny anecdotes that happened during your data collection.

## **Conclusion**

The content part of the paper closes with a conclusion. It should include a summary of your most important results, the answer to the leading research question you raised in the introduction and, optionally, issues that have not been discussed and aspects of future studies.

## **3. Citation and references**

### **General remarks**

Knowing how and what to quote is one of the essential skills required when writing an academic paper. Failure to use references and citations correctly can result in charges of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. It is vital that you present correct and complete information on the sources you use. There are different ways to document quoted material. The method presented here is one of the most commonly used in linguistics and convenient both for the reader and the author of a paper. If you choose to use a different style of documentation, please remember that you have to be consistent and precise, and you should check with your supervisor if this is acceptable.

### **What to cite**

Any sources used in your paper have to be presented in two places, the citation within the running text and the list of references at the end of the paper. Whenever you present an idea that is not your own and not common knowledge, you are expected to cite it in the text. All sources have to be indicated, not only direct quotations. Every time you render an opinion or a result from the work of another scholar, you *must* indicate this by using "cf." (*confer to*) before name, year and page number.



You should focus on citing up-to-date literature including journal articles for your seminar paper. A good starting point for your literature search is the *MLA International Bibliography* and the *Bibliography of Linguistic Literature*. Details can be found on the web page <http://corpora-engling.split.uni-bamberg.de/>.

### **Managing your literature collection**

Whenever you cite a source you should immediately include it in your list of references. For shorter papers this can easily be done “by hand” in your word processor but for longer papers this method can quickly become confusing. The university offers the reference management software *Citavi Pro* free of charge. Details can be found on the web page <http://www.uni-bamberg.de/ub/die-ub-im-ueberblick/digitale-bibliothek/literaturverwaltung-mit-citavi/>.

### **How to cite**

In linguistics, citation is generally stated as *Author (Year: Page)* in the text, rather than as a bibliographical entry in a footnote:

Hawkins (2003: 187) explains that “[s]ince *combination* was defined above as ‘two categories A and B are in a relation of combination iff they occur within the same syntactic mother phrase or maximal projection’ [...] [he will] refer to these as *combinatorial dependencies*.”

In pilot studies for the British National Corpus, for instance, Crowdy (1993: 261) reports that even though digital recorders produce high-quality recordings “under good recording conditions they were not significantly better than analogue recorders under the recording conditions likely to be encountered in this project [the British National Corpus].”

The lengths of subperiods were shorter in the later periods of the corpus “to include the crucial decades of the gradual formation of the fifteenth-century Chancery standard within one and the same period” (Rissanen 1992: 189).

The dynamics of the interlanguage are determined by the interplay of various learner-specific processes, strategies, and rules, which at one and the same time can be characterized as variable and as systematic (cf. Brown 1976b).

For citations with two or three authors, cite all author names (e.g. “Wray & Bloomer 2006” or “Joseph, Rice & Salmons 2007”). For citations with more than three authors, the abbreviation *et al.* (Latin *et alii* ‘and others’) should be used for all but the first author (e.g. “Quirk et al. 1985”). Always give all author names in the list of references.

### **Shorter and longer quotations**

Shorter quotations within the text are marked by double quotation marks. Longer quotations (three lines or more) begin in a new line, are single-spaced and indented either on the left or on both sides about 1.25 cm. Note that there are no quotation marks around longer quotations.

It is absolutely unacceptable in scholarly work to change form or content of a quotation, e.g. a translation or the addition of italics not present in the original work. Additions or comments are inserted in square brackets and followed up by your initials:

“This [our experiences with the physical world; N.N.] explains why”

Changes in grammatical concord, e.g. changing the author’s “I” to “[he]”, and typographical adaptations, e.g. capitalization at the beginning of a quote, are also indicated by using square brackets. Omissions within quotation marks are marked by three dots in square brackets “[...]”. If there is a mistake in the original text, you may add “[sic]” (Latin for so ‘this is the way I found it’) immediately after the error.

### ***Introducing quotations***

Quotations should never speak for themselves. Whenever you include a paraphrase, summary or direct quotation, you should introduce it to your reader using a signal phrase. A signal phrase usually states the name of the author, the year of publication and the page number if necessary and includes an appropriate verb. Examples are:

As Fillmore (1992: 39) correctly observes, “ ...”  
 Biber (1993: 254) concludes that “ ...”  
 Kennedy (1996: 255) finds “ ...”

Hacker (2009: 486) lists useful verbs for introducing quotations and paraphrases:

admit, agree, argue, assert, believe, claim, compare, confirm, contend, declare, deny, emphasize, insist, note, observe, point out, reason, refute, reject, report, respond, suggest, think, write

Remember that when you quote it is a text you are quoting and not a person. This is also the reason why you generally use the present tense for introducing quotations, results and ideas from other sources. Phrases like “As the famous linguist Randolph Quirk wrote in his ground-breaking grammar ...” are unsuitable.

### ***List of references***

At the end of the paper (and before a potential appendix) a complete alphabetical list of the sources used for your work is placed, ordered according to the last name of the authors. It begins on a new page and is entitled “References”. All books and articles referred to in the text must be listed and, vice versa, all those listed in the references must be referred to in the text. Avoid the groupings according to primary literature (a particular author or text discussed in the paper) and secondary literature (scholarly criticism) if it is not strictly necessary.

Both in the titles of books and in the titles of articles, all words except prepositions, articles and conjunctions may be capitalized. If you choose to do so, do it consistently.

Use indentation of the second and following lines (*hängender Einzug*) and avoid overformatting such as automatic list functions with bullet points.

If two references agree in author and year, the letters “a”, “b” etc. are added after the year both in the references in the text and in the list of references.

You should base your list of references on the suggestions in the *Unified style sheet for linguistics* (Joseph, Rice & Salmons 2007). *Citavi Pro* can produce a list of references according to this style automatically.

You may put the titles of journal articles and articles in collections in double quotation marks (“...”). If you choose to do so, do it consistently.

### **Monographs**

author. year. *title[: subtitle]*. [edition.] [number of volumes (if more than one).] [series and series number.] place: publisher.

Dobson, E.J. 1968. *English pronunciation 1500-1700*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 Kövecses, Zoltán. 2002. *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2005. *Englische Morphologie und Wortbildung: Eine Einführung*.  
 Grundlagen der Anglistik und Amerikanistik 25. Berlin: Erich Schmidt.

### **Articles in collections**

You must refer to the article that you used in a collection of articles by quoting its author and title etc., and not by a wholesale reference to the whole collection.

author. year. *title[: subtitle]*. In: editor[s] (ed[s].), *collectiontitle*. [series.] place: publisher. pages.

Hawkins, John A. 2003. Why are zero-marked phrases close to their heads? In: Günter Rohdenburg & Britta Mondorf (eds.), *Determinants of grammatical variation in English*. Topics in English Linguistics 43. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 175–204.  
 Lehmann, Winfred P. 1972b. Proto-Germanic syntax. In: Frans van Coetsem & Herbert L. Kufner (eds.), *Toward a grammar of Proto-Germanic*. Tübingen: Niemeyer. 239–268.  
 Sabban, Annette. 1999. Vorwort. In: Annette Sabban (ed.), *Phraseologie und Übersetzen: Phrasemata II*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis. 7–8.

### **Articles in journals**

author. year. *title[: subtitle]*. *journal* volume(issue). pages.

Casali, Roderic F. 1998. Predicting ATR activity. *Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS)* 34(1). 55–68.  
 Lehmann, Winfred P. 1972a. Converging theories in linguistics. *Language* 48. 266–275.

### **Online sources**

Whenever available you should cite trustworthy, printed sources or equivalent electronic books or online journals. If you use online sources, make sure that the information presented there is reliable. Try to find the author, title and date of the source and make the entry in the list of references as precise and complete as possible. The last date given in the reference is the date on which you last accessed the site.

- Burlingham, Cynthia. 1997. *Picturing childhood*. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/childhood/pictur.htm> (28 October 2002).
- Caruso, Jen. 2001. The anatomy museum: Reading Irigaray. *Nasty* 8: 6 pp. <http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/nasty/2001/01-07-03/articles/8/caruso/index.html> (28 October 2002).
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. Genealogy data: Frequently occurring surnames from census 2000. <http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/data/2000surnames/index.html> (20 May 2011).

#### 4. References and further reading

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- Schunk, Alexander. 2009. *LaTeX: Das Praxisbuch*. 4. Auflage. Poing: Franzis.
- Trask, R. L. 1997. *The Penguin guide to punctuation*. London: Penguin.
- Wray, Alison & Aileen Bloomer. 2006. *Projects in linguistics: A practical guide to researching language*. 2nd edn. London: Hodder Education.