

Guidelines for Academic Papers: Applied Linguistics and ELT¹

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¹ This guide is built to a large extent on and includes direct quotations from the 6th edition of the 'Term paper and thesis guidelines: Linguistics' published by the University of Bonn in October 2019 (<https://www.applied-linguistics.uni-bonn.de/en/uploads/downloads/studying/resources-for-students/term-paper-and-thesis-guidelines-6th-edition>) and the 'Referencing with APA 6th - Brief Guide' published by the AUT Library in March 2019 (https://aut.ac.nz.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=47024979).

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1. General information and conventions

For information on how and when to submit your thesis/paper, please consult your supervisor/lecturer. For your Bachelor's thesis, you have a total of eight weeks available for writing. When working with empirical data, you can apply for 12 weeks. For your Master's thesis, you have 15 weeks available for writing. When working with empirical data, you can apply for 19 weeks. Regarding thesis evaluation, please factor in three months after submission. If you plan to start your teacher training (Referendariat) in May, ensure your Master's thesis is submitted no later than the beginning of January. Alternatively, if you intend to commence teacher training in November, submit your thesis no later than the beginning of July.

1.1 Length of papers

- B.A. Thesis: approx. 12,000 – 18,000 words (approx. 30 – 45 pages)
- M.A. Thesis: approx. 24,000 – 32,000 words (approx. 60 – 80 pages)
- Other papers: ask your lecturer

The title page and table of contents as well as the reference list, appendices and declaration of originality do not count into the length of the paper.

2. Layout/Formatting

- font: Use a font that is easy to read (Times New Roman/Arial/Calibri) and 11/12 pt.
- spacing: one and a half
- margins should be used as follows:
 - 2.5 cm on the top, left and right side
 - 2 cm on the bottom
- margins should be aligned in a justified format (Blocksatz)
- use page numbers starting with 1 on the page where the introduction begins
- headings and sub-headings should be indicated as such by using a different font size. Also use numbers for each (sub-)chapter. You can use the style templates of your text programme.
- page breaks: Avoid page breaks within graphs and tables. Also, the heading below/ or above a graph or table (with numbers, e.g. table 1: description of what is shown) should not be separated from the actual element it refers to. That does not mean that we encourage empty pages before a table or graph. Also avoid page breaks between chapters. Just start a new chapter in the middle of a page rather than on a new page.

3. Structure

A thesis or research paper generally consists of the following parts

- title page
- table of contents (separate page)
- introduction
- literature review (leading towards research gap/problem/question)
- methodology
- results
- discussion (incl. or as separate section: limitations of study)

- conclusion
- reference list
- appendix/appendices

At the end of your thesis/paper you should place the declaration of originality and declaration of the use of digital tools (eidesstattliche Versicherung see chapter 10). This document is not listed in the table of contents and does not have a page number. Follow APA conventions (7th edition) and stay consistent! You can find more information on these via the [APA-style homepage](#).

3.1 Title page

This page presents the reader with

- title of thesis/paper
- title of seminar/module/study programme
- name of lecturer/supervisors
- author's name, mail address and other contact details
- place and date of submission

<p>TU Dortmund Applied Linguistics and ELT <i>Seminar title</i> <i>Lecturer/Supervisor</i> <i>Semester</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Title</i></p> <p><i>Name</i> <i>Matriculation number</i> <i>Email address</i> <i>Address</i> <i>Course of study</i> <i>Place and date of submission</i></p>
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Example title page (the italics signal replaceable content)

Finding a good title is an important step in academic writing. A good title is succinct, and focused. It should make your reader interested and also tell them what to expect. The title should neither be the research question nor the answer to the research question. In a title as well as in chapter headings and subheadings usually all content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) are capitalized, whereas all remaining function words stay in lower case.

3.2 Table of contents

The table of contents starts on a new page and includes all numbered headings, sub-headings and their corresponding page numbers. You should only use sub-chapters if there is more than one under one chapter. Each sub-chapter should have more than one paragraph. Use the style templates of your text programme.

Table of contents	
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature review	2
2.1 Sub-chapter 1.....	4
2.2 Sub-chapter 2.....	5

Example table of contents

When creating subchapters, it is recommended not to go further than three decimals (e.g. 2.2.1).

3.3 Introduction

This chapter starts on a new page with page number one. The chapter includes information on:

- motivation for research (not only personal (e.g. “It is interesting to me, because I heard about in a seminar”), but with real-life context)
- broad question this paper deals with
- structure of your paper/signposting

3.4 Literature review

This chapter should show your advanced involvement with the literature that is relevant to your topic. This includes the familiarity with important concepts and other studies carried out in the area. You are welcome to compare results and critique literature with the help of other literature in an objective way. Topics for critique are shortcomings in methodology, contextuality and contradictory findings from different researchers. The strengths of this chapter are visible in the selection of appropriate literature, how well you connect the information and how critically you engage with the information. Don't simply summarize the things you read and do not just provide strings of quotes. Make sure you only write down what you have understood.

When defining a term, you can present different explanations of those terms, but make sure to tell your reader which one you stick with in the scope of this paper.

This section does not only elaborate key concepts and a synthesis of relevant previous research, but also shows the research gap/problem/question. Therefore, this can be already mentioned here and then discussed further in the next chapter.

3.5 Methodology

This chapter gives a detailed account of the method(s) you used. This includes a detailed account of the which/who and why of

- your research question(s)
- data collection procedure
 - method
 - research instruments – research procedures (if applicable, usually with quantitative research)
 - data collection (information about sampling/participants, the process of collecting data)
- data analysis

Furthermore, here (and/or at a later stage of your paper) is where you should acknowledge the strengths and limitations of your research design.

3.6 Results

In this chapter you neutrally present the results of your study without yet connecting it to previous research. The use of tables, graphs and other visual aids improves reader-friendliness and is highly encouraged. Of course, you can put (a selection of) tables in this part and place the rest of the results in the appendix. All graphs and tables should be numbered and given a title (Table 1: Distribution of class time spent on different social forms). These titles can be placed before or after the table/graph. When using tables in the main body (not in the appendix) you must refer to them as they only illustrate your argument not serve as an argument in its own right. With this chapter your task is to guide the reader through the results of your research. Like a tour-guide, you should highlight interesting result instead of mentioning every single detail.

3.7 Discussion

This chapter presents the results through the perspective of your research question(s) and your chosen method and connects them with your literature review, especially previous research findings. Again, this chapter asks you to be critical with the results and the limitations of your research. Another important part of this chapter deals with the real-life implications of your research. In our field these are implications for the discipline of Applied Linguistics, for classrooms, for curricula, for material design, for language policies, for teacher training, etc.

→ For qualitative studies, 3.6 and 3.7 (the presentation and discussion of findings) can be dealt with within one chapter.

3.8 Conclusion

This is the last chapter of your thesis/paper. It entails a summary of your research questions and results, a summary of the major limitations of your paper and ideas for future research. Do not mention new insights in this chapter. A good conclusion also relates to points that were made in the introduction. Finally, open questions for future research can be addressed.

3.9 References

This section in contrast to everything from the introduction to the conclusion does not get a chapter numbering, but a page number.

For more information see sections 7-9 in this document.

3.10 Appendix

This part of the paper/thesis includes all your research instruments, collected data and tables/graphs that you did not put in the main text, but reference in the main text. You can have several appendices. Make sure they are all numbered. Even though the appendices are numbered, the overall section in your paper does not get a chapter numbering. You can start the page numbering here using roman numbers if you want to.

4. Style

A research paper as well as a thesis count as academic work and should therefore be written in a formal, academic register. Therefore, do not use contractions (don't; I'm). The first person (I, we) should only be used when talking about your own research (methodology) and your own opinion (discussion). A gender-neutral language is also expected from you. To avoid sexist language either use *them* instead of *he/she* when you do not know the gender or use plural forms.

To adjust your register towards a more formal style you can consult [Phrasebank Manchester](#).

5. Major pitfalls

There are three common issues with submissions.

1. Carelessness

Even before looking at the content the reader forms an impression based on the formal appearance of your paper. Make sure to check for consistency in:

- spacing (before and after headlines, paragraphs, quotes, tables/graphs, reference entries)
- fonts
- formatting of headlines

Also check for spelling errors, commas and make sure your reference list is complete. This includes checking whether all references in the text appear in the reference list and vice versa. I.e. only include literature that you have actually used in your thesis.

2. Focus

Make sure to keep the reader's attention at all time. That's easiest when keeping the issue in question in your focus without straying too far from it. The relevance of each topic should be clear to the reader at all times. It all starts with your chosen structure. It needs to be logical and comprehensible.

3. Additional value of your work

Make sure your work presents an additional value to the research community. In order to do so, you need to go beyond writing a summary. Ensure that you are connecting your research with other publications and/or that you are presenting it from a specific perspective/in a specific (new) context.

6. Notes on plagiarism

Plagiarism means using others' intellectual work without referencing. This comprises direct copying of entire phrases and paragraphs, as well as word-by-word translations. Furthermore, it includes paraphrased versions of intellectual work without referencing the author(s). Self-plagiarism describes the use of large amounts of texts that have already been used in other work or submissions by yourself.

You should, of course, refer to other people's ideas and concepts in your essays/papers/etc., but you always need to acknowledge their intellectual property by referring to the original work from which you obtained the respective information.

6.1 How to avoid plagiarism²

- 1) Reference: Check whether all the references used in the text appear in your list of references and vice versa. Provide the full bibliographical details so other people can comprehend and retrace this information.
- 2) Personal contribution: Always differentiate between your work and work by others. This includes texts, codes, tables, graphic elements and files, even when they have been downloaded from the internet.
- 3) Direct quotes: Use quotation marks at the beginning and end of every direct quote.
- 4) Paraphrasing: For ideas and concepts that you paraphrase, place the source in brackets at the appropriate position in the text.
- 5) Secondary quotes: Identify secondary quotes as such if you have not checked the original source.
- 6) List of references: At the end of your paper/text/presentation, list ALL sources you referenced in the text.
- 7) Common knowledge: If you can assume something to be common knowledge, no reference is necessary. However, if this common knowledge is taken from other authors, you must place the reference appropriately in the text and the reference list.

6.2 Consequences of plagiarism

Following §3(1) of the “Rules of Good Scientific Practice” at TU Dortmund, every hint of plagiarism needs to be followed up by the supervisor. Depending on the severity of the case, different measures from written warnings to failure of the course will be taken. In severe, intentionally, and repeatedly occurring cases, the student in question can be expelled from the university (Exmatrikulation).

7. Referencing

Follow APA conventions (7th edition) and stay consistent! You can find more information on these guidelines in chapters 7 to 9 of this document or via the [APA-style homepage](#).

7.1 How to reference in the text

There are different options of referring to other author's/authors' intellectual property in your work. The following sections present these possibilities.

7.1.1 Direct Quotations

Direct quotes are word-to-word reproductions from other authors or from work that you previously submitted.

- Quotations shorter than three lines are placed in the text, opened and closed by quotation marks (“...”).
 - There is generally no punctuation at the end of the quote / before the closing quotation mark. Punctuation is only placed after the closing quotation mark.

² The following passage is an English version based on ‘Zitierknigge’, published by ETH Zurich (<https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/rechtliches-abschluesse/leistungskontrollen/plagiat-zitierknigge.pdf>).

- Author, year and page number(s) need to be put either after or before the quote in an appropriate manner.

... Hall, Smith and Wicaksono state that there are people who believe “that some *languages* are better than others, for example some are harder or easier to learn” (2017: 9).

There are people who believe “that some *languages* are better than others, for example some are harder or easier to learn” (Hall, Smith & Wicaksono 2017: 9)

- Quotations that are three full lines or longer should not be placed within the paragraph, but as an extra paragraph that is indented from the left and right by 1 cm from both sides. For these quotes, please use single spacing and a font size smaller than the rest of the text.
 - Do not use quotation marks in this case. Punctuation stays as in the quoted text.
 - Place the reference either behind the punctuation mark in the quote or in the last sentence of the preceding paragraph.

... Hall, Smith and Wicaksono when talking about the belief that some people use their language wrongly also discuss the way languages are compared to each other.

An extension of that dead end is the belief that some *languages* are better than others, for example some are harder or easier to learn, some are closer to god, some are more beautiful, more complex, more pleasant, more efficient, more logical, more civilized, etc. (2017: 9)

7.1.2 Paraphrasing ideas

- If you paraphrase a concept, idea, fact, etc. that is explained on a specific page / specific pages, you should place the page number in your in-text reference.
- If you refer to the main result / main statement of a publication, page numbers can be omitted in the in-text reference.

If you paraphrase an idea or explain a concept in more than just one sentence, the reference does not need to be placed after every single sentence but at the end of these explanations and paraphrases.

Hall, Smith and Wicaksono argue that certain groups of people view some languages more positively than other languages due to issues of aesthetics, complexity and religious superiority (2017: 9).

7.2 How to write up a reference list

- A correct, complete and consistently organised reference list is essential to any academic work.
- Try one of the following ways to find out what works best for you. You can use tools such as Endnote or Citavi, or use the bibliography tools offered by Microsoft Word or Open Office. Alternatively, manually editing the reference list and adding it to the end of your paper is possible, too.

- A bibliography **only** includes sources you refer to in the text. Publications you have read, but not referenced in the text, are not included.
- References in the bibliography are organised alphabetically.
- All lines but the first line of every reference should be indented from the left.
- Entries by the same author are listed in chronological order, starting with the earliest one.
- In case you referenced several articles by the same author published in the same year, these must be differentiated by the use of letters after the relevant year in the text as well as in the reference list, e.g.,
 - Seidlhofer, B. (2003a). ...
 - Seidlhofer, B. (2003b). ...

Which one is a, b, c etc. depends on the first letter of the title.

8. Example reference list

- Anthony, L. (2014). AntConc (Version 3.4.3) [Computer Software], Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Retrieved from <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/>.
- British Council (n.d.). *Inductive Approach*. Retrieved (date of last access) from: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/inductive-approach>.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Decke-Cornill, H. (2003). We have to invent the language we are supposed to teach. The issue of English as a Lingua Franca in language education in Germany. In M. Byram & P. Grundy (Eds.), *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 59-71.
- Gillon, C. (2016, 26th February). How we judge others when they speak (and we should stop). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hj7wkh6nONE>.
- Gnutzmann, C. & Intemann, F. (Eds.) (2005). *The Globalisation of English and the English Language Classroom*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Hall, C. J., Smith, P. H., & Wicaksono, R. (2017). *Mapping Applied Linguistics: A Guide for Students and Practitioners* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, G. (2011). *Exploring English Language Teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDonough, K. & Chaikitmongkol, W. (2007). Teachers' and learners' reactions to a task-based EFL course in Thailand. *TESOL Quarterly* 41 (1), 107-132.
- Myhre, M. G. (2015). *Gamification in mobile language learning: Improving user satisfaction for Norwegian immigrants*. Unpublished master's thesis. Gjøvik University College, Norway.
- van Batenburg, E., Oostdam, R., van Gelderen, A., Fukkink, R., & de Jong, N. (2020). The effects of instructional focus and task type on pre-vocational learners' ability in EFL oral interaction. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 171 (2), 153-190. <https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.18027.van>.
- VOICE. 2013. The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (version POS Online 2.0). Director: Barbara Seidlhofer; Researchers: Stefan Majewski, Ruth Osimk-Teasdale, Marie-Luise Pitzl, Michael Radeka, Nora Dorn. <http://voice.univie.ac.at/pos/> (date of last access).

9. Reference quick guide

Item	Reference list entry	In-text citation	Further comments
Monographs (book, one author)	Hall, G. (2011). <i>Exploring English Language Teaching</i> . London: Routledge.	(Hall 2011) or Hall states ... (2011).	Short direct quotes: Enclose in “...” and give page number, e.g. Hall states that “...” (2011: 240).
Book, two authors	Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). <i>How Languages are Learned</i> (4 th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.	(Lightbown & Spada 2013) or Lightbown and Spada (2013)	In text: Within brackets: use ‘&’ between authors. In a sentence: use ‘and’ between authors. Reference list: use commas and an ampersand (&) between authors.
Book, three or more authors	Hall, C. J., Smith, P. H., & Wicaksono, R. (2017). <i>Mapping Applied Linguistics: A Guide for Students and Practitioners</i> (2 nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.	(Hall et al. 2011) or Hall et al. state ... (2011)	In text: To condense in-text citations with over 2 authors, use "et al." after the first author. Keep in mind, "et al." stands for the Latin "et alia" (and others), so always include the period after "al." Reference list: Give all names.
Book, corporate or institutional author	Council of Europe. (2001). <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.	First citation: (Council of Europe [CoE] 2001) or Council of Europe [CoE] (2001) Subsequent citation: (CoE 2001)	If the name is short or if the abbreviation would not be easily understood, type out the name each time it occurs. Indicate abbreviation in the first in-text citation.

E-book from a library database			PDF documents are not likely to change so do not include a date of retrieval.
Book chapter	Decke-Cornill, H. (2003). We have to invent the language we are supposed to teach. The issue of English as a Lingua Franca in language education in Germany. In M. Byram & P. Grundy (Eds.), <i>Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning</i> . Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 59-71.	(Decke-Cornill 2003) or Decke-Cornill (2003)	In-text citation: Give page number for paraphrased ideas or quotes Reference list: the main entry in your list is the author of the chapter including the page numbers of the chapter. Editors: first name initial. surname.
Edited volumes	Gnutzmann, C. & Intemann, F. (Eds.) (2005). <i>The Globalisation of English and the English Language Classroom</i> . Tübingen: Narr.	(Gnutzmann & Intemann 2005) or Gnutzmann and Intemann (2005)	
Journal article	McDonough, K. & Chaikitmongkol, W. (2007). Teachers' and learners' reactions to a task-based EFL course in Thailand. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i> 41 (1), 107-132.	(McDonough & Chaikitmongkol 2007) or McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007)	If you download a journal article from a website of, e.g., Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, you do not need to give the URL but just treat this article as if you read it in a printed version. You should only give a URL or a DOI if the article you are citing has been published in an online journal.
Journal article (online)	van Batenburg, E., Oostdam, R., van Gelderen, A., Fukkink, R., & de Jong, N. (2020). The effects of instructional focus and task type on pre-vocational learners' ability in EFL oral interaction. <i>International Journal of Applied Linguistics</i> , 171(2), 153-190. https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.18027.van	(van Batenburg et al. 2020) or van Batenburg et al. (2020)	If a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is given, place it at the end of your entry.

Videos online	Gillon, C. (2016, 26 th February). How we judge others when they speak (and we should stop). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hj7wkh6nONE	(Gillon 2016) or Gillon (2016)	Reference List: If only the screen name is available give that as the author. Give exact date of online post, format [Video file], no date of retrieval.
Corpora	VOICE. 2013. The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (version POS Online 2.0). Director: Barbara Seidlhofer; Researchers: Stefan Majewski, Ruth Osimk-Teasdale, Marie-Luise Pitzl, Michael Radeka, Nora Dorn. http://voice.univie.ac.at/pos/ (<i>date of last access</i>).	(VOICE 2013) or VOICE (2013)	Check the website of the respective corpora for all information necessary for the reference.
Unpublished papers	Myhre, M. G. (2015). <i>Gamification in mobile language learning: Improving user satisfaction for Norwegian immigrants</i> . Unpublished master's thesis. Gjøvik University College, Norway.	(Myhre 2015) or Myhre (2015) or	No capitals for unpublished work
Software	Anthony, L. (2014). AntConc (Version 3.4.3) [Computer Software], Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Retrieved from http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/	(Anthony 2014) or Anthony (2014)	Check the website of the respective software for all information necessary for the reference.
Website	British Council (n.d.). <i>Inductive teaching</i> . Retrieved (<i>date of last access</i>) from: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/inductive-approach		There are different rules for different types of websites. Check the APA style manuals

10. Declaration of originality/Eidesstattliche Versicherung

The [declaration of originality and the use of digital tools](#) must be filled out and included at the end of every submission (essays, thesis, lesson plans, material analysis, etc). Without it, the submission will not be accepted and will not be counted as submitted on time. The declaration must be put on a page on its own. It does not occur in the table of contents. A page number is not necessary.

For masters and bachelor thesis you **must** use [the sheet provided by the University](#).