



DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I DE GERMANÍSTICA

**PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING
PAPERS IN LINGUISTICS**

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1. Organization and sections

Research papers should always include an **Abstract** (150-200 words), including an introduction (presenting your topic and objectives), a development and a conclusion. The first section of the paper proper is the **Introduction**, in which you need to clearly identify the aims you pursue. In other words, you must define the topic or object of the study (what the paper is about) and the objectives (what for?); also, how it connects with previous research on your topic. The longest part of the paper should be the development, which can vary depending on the kind of paper you are writing. In most cases (but follow the instructions of your teacher or supervisor), it includes a **Review of the literature/Theoretical background**, a **Description of the topic under study**, and an **Analysis of the examples**. The paper finishes with a **Conclusion**, in which you summarize what you have discussed (**never add new information**). It can also include limitations of the study and issues for further research.

2. Edition: Basic instructions

All papers must have a **cover page**, with the following information: your name, title of the paper or TFG dissertation, name of subject/degree, teacher's/supervisor's name, date and [UAB logo](#). After the cover page comes the **Table of Contents**,¹ a list of the sections of the paper together with the page numbers. An **Index of Tables and Figures** must be included, if necessary, on the page following the Table of Contents.

Papers must be printed with **double spacing** (except for the abstract, long quotations, the reference list and the notes, which are single-spaced). Use **Times New Roman** font, **size 12** for the text (section titles included) and the references, Times Roman

¹ Tables of Contents can be created automatically in *Word*.

size 18 for the title on the cover page, and Times New Roman **size 11** for the abstract, long quotations and notes. The title of the paper and the main section headings (e.g., **2.2.1 Neologisms**) should be in **bold**, and all sections must be **numbered**. **Margins** should be left on both sides of the page (3 cm), and at the top and the bottom (2.5 cm). The text should be fully **justified**.

Page numbering is a little complex. The cover page is not numbered, and neither is the Acknowledgments page (if present). The Table of Contents page and the Index of Tables and Figures (optional) is numbered in **Roman** numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). From the abstract page onwards, **Arabic** numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) are used.²

Leave a **blank space** before a new section, but not between paragraphs. The first line of paragraphs must be indented (1.25 cm) (in *Paràgraf > Especial > Primera línia*).

You may use **footnotes** but restrict them to giving extra information (do not use them for referencing secondary sources). The following are examples of useful notes:

- Additional examples of the concept or idea you are discussing.
- More evidence to support the statement you are making.
- Draw reader's attention to other works dealing with a similar concept.

Notes must be numbered by superscripts, after punctuation marks. Use the tool *Referències* in *Word*.

Diagrams, tables, graphs, figures and maps must be labelled and numbered. Place a descriptive caption underneath in font size 11 (e.g., Table 5. Statistics for literacy in Australia 1905-1925).

² This can be a bit daunting, but do not get discouraged. You can do it using *Salts de secció + desvincular* in *Word*.

The list of works you quote from or refer to in your paper must be included in the section **References**, which occurs after the Conclusion, and before the Appendix (if there is one). There is more information about this issue in Section 8.

You may have to use **examples**, which must be numbered sequentially in the whole paper (that is, do not start anew in each section) and indented.

(1) Can you please open the door?

(2) He is the president of the United States.

When referring to them in the text, use numbers (e.g., In (1) we find a clear example of the deictic use of the definite article, and in (2) of the cataphoric use).

3. Paragraphs

A paper should be written in full and well-developed paragraphs. The idea dealt with in each paragraph is announced in the initial sentence, called *topic sentence*. The sentences in a paragraph should be well connected: develop your ideas and link them up correctly with the help of words and phrases such as *however*, *in spite of*, *on the other hand* or *besides*. Use connectors sensibly, however, never in excess. If you have doubts about when and how to use them, you can consult a reliable English grammar. Please note:

- Do **not use bullet points** unless they are absolutely justified.
- Avoid short paragraphs and never write **one-sentence** paragraphs.
- Do not begin paragraphs (or sentences) with the conjunctions *and*, *or* or *but*.

4. Sentences

All sentences must have a **subject** and a **finite verb**. In English it is not possible to join two independent clauses by a comma; (3) is ungrammatical and (4) is grammatical:

(3) *Students often join two separate clauses with a comma, this is incorrect.

(4) Students often join two separate clauses with a comma, which is incorrect.

In (4) we can see subordination; other options are coordination (with *and*) or the use of colons and semi-colons. Try to vary the structures you use, and avoid unnecessarily long sentences, particularly those with several embedded clauses (quite frequent in Catalan or Spanish). As for **punctuation**, bear in mind that the word right after a colon must be capitalised.

5. Language (register and tone)

The language used should be formal both in register and tone:

- Avoid informal or colloquial expressions such as *stuff like that, anyway, a lot of*.
- Avoid all-purpose words such as *thing, fact, idea*. Find more specific vocabulary.
- Do not use contractions.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Use ONLY black ink.
- Do not use ... to indicate *etc*.
- Do not use expressions such as *I think, I suppose, It is important to mention that*.
- Do not use *he* as a generic pronoun.
- Be careful with unclear pronoun references.
- Do not rely on the same words all the time (e.g., *important* or *interesting*). Use the Thesaurus function (Shift+F7) in *Word* for variety.

- Proof-read your paper, to make sure that there are no typing mistakes, well in advance of the deadline.

6. Metalanguage

Metalanguage is language used to talk about another language, called the object language. It is marked with **italics**. If it is not clearly marked, confusion may arise. See the difference between (5) and (6):

(5) If you say the word and make sure that you pronounce the final sound.

If the object language is not marked, this clause is ungrammatical.

(6) If you say the word *and* make sure that you pronounce the final sound.

Italics is also used when mentioning words in another language, as in (7).

(7) The French word for pencil is *crayon*.

7. Quotations

A good scholar always refers to other scholars' work. However, a large number of quotes and references does not imply that it is automatically a good paper. Include only those quotes and references which you have understood and are related to what you are discussing.

The quotations in your paper prove that you have engaged in the on-going debate around the topic of your choice. You may use them to include information you yourself cannot know, to support an opinion you present, or even to contradict it. It is very important to acknowledge other people's words and ideas, in order to avoid **plagiarism**. Acknowledgement is carried out, as you can see in the following examples, by including

the author's surname (+ optional comma), the date of publication of the text (+ optional colon) and the page number(s) in parentheses.

7.1 Direct quotations

When using a direct quotation (i.e., the author's exact words) you must consider its length.

- If you quote **fewer than 50 words**, the quotation should be embedded in your text and placed between double inverted commas (“...”), with the same type and line spacing.

EXAMPLE

As described by van Someren, Barnard, and Sandberg (1994: xi), this technique “consists of asking people to think aloud while solving a problem and analysing the resulting verbal protocols.”³

- If the quotation is **longer than 50 words**, these should be separated from your text by one space before and after, indented (1 cm both sides), single-spaced and size 11. They are introduced by a colon, and do not appear between quotation marks.

³ The full stop must be placed before the inverted commas.

EXAMPLE

It has also been suggested that successful use of reading strategies was, largely, dependent on “awareness” of, and flexibility in, the use of these strategies according to the purpose of the task or the problem to be solved:

Too often students in second language reading programs, who receive instruction only in the skills or strategies, fail to use them intelligently and on their own volition because they do not appreciate the reasons why such strategies are useful, nor do they understand where and when to use them. (Carrell et al. 1989: 129).⁴

- If your next reference is to the **same source**, you need only reference author and page:

EXAMPLE

“Adding instruction in “awareness” or knowledge about a strategy’s evaluation, rationale, and utility should greatly increase the positive outcomes of instruction” (Carrell: 130).

- If you quote an author, **not by direct consultation** but because you have found him/her quoted in another source, you should indicate this as in:

EXAMPLE

“r-pronunciation clearly correlates with social prestige in New Yorker’s perceptions” (Labov 1976, cited in Trudgill 1983:36).

- You may **skip some words** in quotations that might be irrelevant to the point you are making. Indicate this with (...).

⁴ The full stop must be placed after the parenthesis.

EXAMPLE

Too often students in second language reading programs (...) fail to use them intelligently and on their own volition because they do not appreciate the reasons why such strategies are useful, nor do they understand where and when to use them. (Carrell et al. 1989: 129).

7.2 Indirect quotations

- If instead of using the author's exact words you are using his/her idea or theory, the reference to the author and his/her work should be included in parentheses as follows:

EXAMPLE

In order to account for the ungrammatical constructions under (11) above, we must refer to the Minimality Condition (Chomsky 1995).

EXAMPLE

The following account is based upon Thompson (1974: 7-24).

EXAMPLE

As Thompson (1974) suggests, Chicano English is characterised by (...)

- If you refer to the work of various scholars, order them chronologically (from the oldest reference to the newest):

EXAMPLE

Early research on the L2A of English subjects adopted the traditional version of the Null Subject Parameter (NSP) (Chomsky, 1981; Jaeggli, 1982; Jaeggli and Safir, 1989).

7.3 For all kinds of quotes and paraphrases

- Work by **three authors** should include all names in the first citation, with only the first author followed by *et al.* in subsequent citations. Work by **four or more authors** should use *et al.* in all citations.

EXAMPLE

According to Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch (2002), recursivity is a central property of human language (**first mention**). Hauser et al. (2002) (**subsequent mentions**).

EXAMPLE

Kortmann et al. (2004) give an overview of the grammatical and phonological features of major non-standard varieties of English.

- If you refer to two or more publications by the same author published in the same year, use a letter after the date to organise them: 1983a, 1983b.⁵
- If there are two or more authors, you may use *and* or *&*, but be consistent throughout the paper: either *Smith, James and Parker* or *Smith, James & Parker*.

⁵ This is also the way in which these works must be presented in the References.

8. References

The References is the list of sources from which you have borrowed direct and indirect quotations and information. They must be organised with the author's surnames in **alphabetical order**. Each type of source (book, journal, etc.) follows particular conventions. Please use the ones presented here in your work, and also use French-style indentation at 1.25 cm for text in the References (an option within *Paràgraf* in *Word*).

- Books: Author's Surname, Full first name. (Year of publication). *Title of Book*. City of publication: Publisher.

EXAMPLE

Crystal, David. (2002). *The English Language*. London: Penguin.

If there is more than one author, Author's Surname; Full first name, Full first name Surname & Full first name Surname.⁶ In the references, you must never use *et al.*, that is, you must write the full names of all authors.

EXAMPLE

Isaac, Daniela & Charles Reiss. (2008). *I-Language. An Introduction to Linguistics as Cognitive Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Chapters in edited books: Author's Surname, Full first name. (Year of publication). Title of chapter. In Editor's Full first name Surname (Ed./Eds.), *Title of the Collective Volume* (pp. page numbers). City of publication: Publisher.

EXAMPLE

Grinevald, Colette. (2006). The expression of static location in a typological perspective. In Maya Hickmann & Stéphane Robert (Eds.), *Space in Languages. Linguistic Systems and Cognitive Categories* (pp. 29-58). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Articles in academic journals: Author's Surname, Full first name. (Year of publication). *Title of Journal* number of volume (number of issue): page numbers.

⁶ This is valid for all types of references: books, chapters in books, articles in academic journals, etc.

EXAMPLE

Kasper, Gabriele. (1996). Introduction: Interlanguage pragmatics in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18 (2): 145-148.

- Articles in websites: Author's Surname, Full first name. (Year of publication). *Title of Article*. Retrieved Month Day Year, from URL.⁷

EXAMPLE

Anderson, Holly. (2015). *Blades of Glory*. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <http://grantland.com/features/blades-of-glory/>

- General website article without an author: Title of article. *Name of Website*. (Year of publication). Retrieved Month Day Year, from URL.

EXAMPLE

SQ3R reading method. *Study Guides and Strategies*. (No date). Retrieved April 21, 2018 from <http://www.studygs.net/texred2.htm>

- Websites: *Name of Website* (Year of Publication). Retrieved Month Day Year, from URL.

EXAMPLE

American Psychological Association. (2001). Retrieved April 22, 2018 from <http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>

- Theses: Author's Surname, Full first name. (Year of elaboration). *Title of Thesis*. Type of Thesis, Department, University. URL if available.

EXAMPLE

Pérez-Parent, Montserrat. (1999). *The Production of Requests by Catalan Learners of English*. M.A. Thesis, Departament de Filologia Anglesa. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

⁷ Articles published in electronic journals follow the conventions of articles published in academic journals.

9. Some final advice

- 1.** The deadline is the last possible date to hand in your paper/dissertation, not, as it is often the case, the date when you finish writing your work. You need to plan your research and writing so that you have sufficient time for editing and for revisions. Ideally, the paper/dissertation should be ready at least one week before the deadline, and the day before should be used for final revisions. You should never expect your tutor to edit the paper for you.
- 2.** Teachers mark read papers/dissertations in very short periods of time. A careful presentation of your work helps to make a good impression. The rules for editing provided here are a universal academic convention which you need to follow.