

4. PAPERS IN IN LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

When someone sets out to write a paper in linguistics, he/she needs a very specific topic, that is, examine a very small area of linguistics. The topic of a linguistics paper is usually a linguistic problem or phenomenon, and the main aim of the paper is to show various treatments of the particular problem including the writer's own opinion. The paper usually starts with the comparison/analysis/discussion of what different authors say about the same topic, that is, a survey of the relevant literature arranged into some framework invented by the writer. The overview should be critical (that is, reflect the student's agreement, disagreement, or partial agreement with other contributors to the question), and should be followed by an argumentative proposal of the writer's own opinion of the problem. In certain types of papers students should endeavor to contribute to the discussion of the problem using data collected by themselves.

A theoretical paper in linguistics is generally a very thorough and well-structured overview of the special literature, presented on the basis of an original principle. That is, the writer has to make a unique presentation of the existing literature on the topic. It means, for instance, that simply presenting a summary on what Radford said about the noun phrase and then giving some examples of what Abney said on these phrases, does not qualify as a theoretical paper. A good overview looks at all the aspects of the given topic, uses many sources, and presents the topic from a new aspect.

Another type of thesis or seminar paper in linguistics is when the student collects and analyses a certain type of and a certain amount of linguistic data. This occurs quite often in the case of a topic in historical linguistics or dialectology. The data can be collected from e.g. written works representing a certain variety, or a certain stage, of the English language, or from dictionaries. The data should be collected by the student, and the examination and the analysis should be carried out by him or her in accordance with the methods used in historical linguistics and/or dialectology. The conclusion of this type of essay is normally less theoretical than of the previously discussed type, and will usually lead to the reinforcement of the views of certain scholars on the topic and to contradicting certain others.

In a linguistics paper special attention must be paid to the way we use linguistic data in the text. If the data is given within the text, it has to be highlighted in italics:

“As it can be seen in the analysis, there is a falling tone on the word *cancelled*.”

If you have to give the meaning/definition of a word, use single inverted commas, e.g.: “In Australian English, *arvo* means ‘afternoon’.”

If data or examples are separated from the text, we usually number them consecutively throughout the paper, and make references to them by mentioning the numbers only. For example:

“The fourth type of deixis is discourse deixis, which concerns the “encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located” (Levinson, 1983, p. 62) as in (7) below.

(7) The most important thing is this: don't ever panic.”

THE THESIS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

A thesis paper in applied linguistics can be of two types: empirical or theoretical. Empirical theses rely on original data collection and analysis, while theoretical theses rely on a review of existing literature and theories. An empirical thesis can employ quantitative or qualitative research methods, such as surveys, interviews, observations, or textual analysis, to collect data. In all cases, when the thesis writer intends to collect original data, the process needs to be discussed with the supervisor during the planning phase to ensure that research ethics regulations are closely followed. The main sections of empirical theses typically are: Abstract, Introduction, Review of the Literature (Literature Review), Methods/ Methodology, Results and Discussion (separately or as one chapter), Conclusion, References. Additional illustrative materials, such as interview guides or questionnaire items should be placed in the Appendix (or Appendices). The Appendix section may also contain a short sample of the raw data (e.g., parts of texts produced by the participants).

A theoretical thesis presents an overview of the theories addressing a particular problem in applied linguistics, and provides a synthesis which enables the writer to find an original solution to the problem. This overview should be critical and analytical, not merely descriptive. A typical thesis structure for a theoretical thesis would be: Abstract, Introduction, Analysis (consisting of chapters with thematic titles), Conclusion, References, Appendix (or Appendices). The Literature Review can be a separate section / chapter but can also be incorporated into the relevant parts in the Analysis.

Common structures for presenting applied linguistics theses include:

- Comparative: This structure compares two or more language phenomena or language-related issues, drawing out similarities and differences.
- Developmental: This structure traces the development of a particular language-related concept, phenomenon, or skill over time.
- Case study: This structure examines a specific case or example in detail to shed light on a larger issue or phenomenon.
- Experimental: This structure uses controlled experiments to test a hypothesis related to language or language use.
- Historical: This structure examines the historical development of a language-related issue or concept.

It is important to note that these structures are not mutually exclusive and many theses may combine elements of multiple structures in their organization and presentation. Ultimately, the structure of a thesis should be chosen based on the goals and objectives of the research and the type of data and findings that will be presented.

All papers in linguistics and applied linguistics should follow the guidelines of the APA style. APA 6 or APA 7 versions are both accepted in case the style is consistent throughout the thesis.

Check out the APA guide at:

APA Guide https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html
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