Comments on style for term papers

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1 Overall structure

Your term paper needs:

2 Gender-inclusive language

Use gender-inclusive language, following the recommendations of the Linguistics Society of America. This is important both in your text **and** in your example sentence!
Download the recommendations from:

> https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/guidelines-inclusive-language

3 Linguistic examples

3.1 . . . within the text

- Examples within the text are marked in italics:

    The words *walk* and *talk* are both verbs. While *walk* expresses an event of walking, *talk* refers to an event of talking.

- All non-English examples need to be translated:

    The expression *Hallo, wie geht's?* 'Hello, how are you?' can be used in almost all greeting contexts in German, except for highly formal ones.

3.2 . . . with numbering

Examples can be set apart by numbering. Whenever you use a numbered example, it needs to be taken up in the text.

The examples in (1) show different ways of talking about a person.

(1)   a.   Alex is a nice person.
        b.   Alex is a nice guy.

While the expression *person* used in (1-a) is rather neutral, the term *guy* in (1-b) has a more informal flavor to it.

The numbers given to examples must be unique in the text, i.e., there can only be **one** example (1).

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                    S
          SPR            HEAD
          NP              VP
         Alex      HEAD        COMP
                    V            NP
                  read     SPR      HEAD
                          Det        N
                           a        book
```
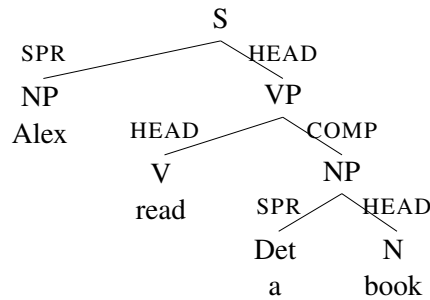
<div align="center">Figure 1: Syntactic analysis of a simple English sentence</div>

4 Figures and tables

The use of figures and tables follows that of numbered examples, i.e.

- Figures are numbered: Figure 1, Figure 2, . . .
  Tables are numbered: Table 1, Table 2, . . .

- Figures and tables need a title.

- Each table and figure must be referred to in the main text and needs to be explained.

Here is an example of a short text referring to a figure:

> The syntactic analysis of a simple English sentence is shown in Figure 1. The structure shows the labels of the syntactic categories at the non-terminal nodes of the tree. The branches are annotated with the grammatical functions. The terminal nodes have complex labels, consisting of the words and their syntactic category.

The use of tables is analogous to that of figures. They need to be referred to in the text and commented on. Here is an example:

> Table 1 gives an overview over the most common part-of-speech labels used in my analysis. The first column contains the traditional labels, such as *noun* and *verb*. The second column indicates the abbreviations commonly used in linguistic texts – and also used above in the tree in Figure 1. The third column lists the corresponding tags that can be used in queries in the sketchengine corpus platform (www.sketchengine.eu). The tags for adjectives, nouns, and verbs are, in fact, regular expressions, i.e., a tag like "V.*" matches with all subtags of verbs used in the corpus.

5 Providing references

5.1 . . . in the text

- Always give the name(s) of the author(s) AND the year (even if there is just one paper with these authors in the references!). Whenever possible give the page number.

- NEVER!!! give full references in the text (or in footnotes). Full references appear at the end of the paper.

traditional label	abbreviation	corpus tags
adjective	A	J.*
adverb	Adv	RB
determiner	Det	DT
noun	N	N.*
preposition	P	IN
verb	V	V.*

Table 1: Overview over part of speech labels

- Only mention papers that you have REALLY seen. NEVER!!! quote someone following someone else's quote – linguistics is not about hearsay!
  Rather: Check the original source to see whether it has been quoted correctly – and, maybe, find that the next sentence in the original source is much better suited for your purpose!

- Try to avoid quotations. Your text should not be a "collage" from other texts, but an independent text.

- If you summarize what someone else has said, you indicate this clearly at the beginning of your summary:

  > In the following, I will go through the *design features of natural language* as they are presented in Mihalicek & Wilson (2011:17–23). The authors name 9 features, . . .

- A short direct quote is given in quotation marks, preceded or followed by authors, year, and page number.

  > Mihalicek & Wilson (2011:409) define a *speech community* as "a group of people speaking the same dialect".
  > A *speech community* can be defined as "a group of people speaking the same dialect" (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011:409) .

- Longer quotes are set apart by indentation. The example also shows that quotes need to be introduced and motivated. Don't let the quotation speak for itself, but tell the reader what the quotation is good for, i.e. which purpose it has in your argumentation. Also: Even if there is a quotation, you should still summarize the aspect that is important for you in your own words.

  > The following quote from a text book shows that in addition to learning basic facts about language and linguistics, applying linguistic methods oneself and raising awareness for linguistic phenomena is a central goal in teaching modern linguistics.
  > > We hope to lead you [the learner, M.S.] to examine your own beliefs and attitudes about language, to make you more aware of the diversity of language systems as well as their fundamental similarities, and to introduce you to some of the applications of linguistic investigation. (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011:5)

5.2   . . . at the end of the text

Follow the standard for referencing exemplified in linguistic papers, seminar handouts etc. (including this very handout).

Over the past few years, the *Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics* has become the most common standard in linguistics (which is also the style used in this handout). It is available at:

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https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/unified-style-sheet
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References

Mihalicek, Vedrana & Christin Wilson (eds.). 2011. *Language files.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press 11th edn.