How to write a paper in Linguistics

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To begin...

- Identify a topic worthy of research and of interest to you.
- Situate your work within a certain area.
- Propose a specific research question.
- Become familiar with the literature in this area.
Your objectives...

- Write a coherent paper discussing your topic in an objective and reliable manner.
- Illustrate knowledge of basic linguistic concepts and of the relevant literature.
- Present clear and well-organized research findings.
Writing style

- Adhere to the standards and conventions of academic English (e.g., spell out abbreviations) and APA.
- Use present tense.
- Keep your language precise and concise.
- Use an analytical style.
Typographic conventions

Remember that you need:

- 1.5-2 spacing
- 12 point font, New Times Roman
- Page numbers (in header) and standard margins
- Division into sections and sub-sections
- Examples that are set aside from the text and numbered consecutively and indented.
- References, both in the body of your paper and at the end.
A cover page
A Table of Contents
An abstract (for a longer paper)
An introduction
A review of the literature
Methods
Results
Discussion
Conclusions
Appendix /Appendices
References
Table of Contents

Headings in sections and sub-sections are numbered as 1, 1.1, 1.2, etc., with 1.1 and 1.2 indented slightly.

1. Introduction
   1.1 Sound patterns in English
   1.2 Phonological awareness

Figures and tables are numbered consecutively, each with a number and a title.
An Abstract

• This is a summary of your paper.
• Situate your paper within a scholarly context.
• State your hypothesis clearly.
• Ensure that the theoretical framework is clear.
• Present your methods, the data and your analysis, as well as your conclusions.
The Introduction

• Present the field and your topic as it has been narrowed down to a specific scope.
• Declare the significance of your work.
• Your topic must be contextualized within a theory.
• Present a clear hypothesis.
• Foreshadow how your paper will continue.
Literature Review

- Carry out a critical review of the literature.
- The topic you have chosen should fit into the framework of your literature review.
- Identify key issues, concepts, and themes, strengths, weakness and gaps in the existing literature.
- Ensure that you include recent research and main researchers in the field.
- Avoid the temptation to over-quote.
There are reports in the language acquisition literature that infants show some limited comprehension of words beginning at approximately nine months of age (Huttenlocher, 1974; Benedict, 1979). Yet, other studies suggest that comprehension skills are quite limited even at 11 months, and that it is not until around 15 months that infants show signs of comprehending and recognizing novel words (Oviatt, 1980, Thomas, Campos, Shucard, Ramsay & Shucard, 1981).
Referencing in the body of your paper

• In-text citation is preferable over footnotes.
• Choose quotes selectively – quality over quantity.
• Integrate citations smoothly into your text.
• Avoid secondary sources where possible.

b. Following Lakoff and Johnson (1980) I will argue that the concept of TIME is conceptualized and structured metaphorically in terms of orientation and movement in space.
An Example

Examples are indented, numbered and often followed by a gloss.

Abide by the conventions e.g., <e> - orthographic representation, [e] – phonetic transcription, /e/ - phonemic symbols, etc.

(3) Ha safta menasheket et ha-yalda
   (the grandmother kisses ACC the girl)
   (Friedman & Novogrodky 2001:7).
Methods

Include:

• How your data were collected.
• Who the participants are.
• Your corpus or materials.
• The type of analysis you carried out (e.g., quantitative or qualitative) and your procedure.
• How you analyzed or coded your data.
Results

• Present your findings; remain objective.
• This is a summary of what you have discovered.
• Visual representations (e.g., tables, charts, etc.) are a common form of representation, but these alone do not suffice. They must be summarized and accompanied by text.
Tables, graphs, charts and figures

• These summarize results and allow the reader to view the results. Choose a suitable format and title for your results.

• Visual representations are not self-evident. Accompany visuals with clear explanations.

• Label all aspects of visual representations (e.g., the axes of graphs). Check APA guidelines (e.g., All tables are centered).
Discussion

• This should follow logically.
• Discuss what your results mean. You may mention:
  - shortcomings of your work.
  - the theoretical and practical implications of your work.
  - areas for future, potential research.
Conclusions

• This should relate back to your introduction. Share your main findings and address whether or not they support your hypothesis.
• Relate your findings to the research of others.
• This section should be clear, explicit and conclusive and it should wind down naturally.
All ideas, quotations, etc. taken from elsewhere must be referenced, both in the body of your paper and at the end of the paper. Taking someone else’s words without referencing them is plagiarism.

Cite only those references you have used.

Make sure that you have complete information about references (e.g., page numbers, place of publication, etc.).

Consult APA guidelines to check that your referencing is formatted correctly (e.g., spacing, use of commas and periods, etc.).
Appendix

• This section is where you include data that are too comprehensive to be included within the text. You may wish to include material from your procedures (e.g., a questionnaire) and data that does not appear, in full, in the body of the paper.

• These items must also appear in your Table of contents.
Writing Tips

* Define your topic carefully before you begin.
* Read, read and read some more. Make notes as you read.
* Set yourself deadlines.
* Draw up an outline. Get feedback before you continue.
* For seminar papers - write a rough draft. Get feedback.
* Record your references in full.
* Write! As you write, stop and print out your work and read it aloud.
* Save your paper in multiple locations.