The Linguistic C-Essay (15 hp)
Guidelines to Essay Writing

English Studies,
Department of Language Studies.

Mats Deutschmann & Marlene Johansson Falck
Institutionen för Språkstudier 2014.
Abstract

This compendium is aimed at students doing the C-essay course in linguistics and provides basic guidelines for this work. It is split into four sections dealing with different aspects of the essay writing process. In Section 1, Course Aims, Structure and Content, we give details of the aims of the course, how it is organised, and give some advice on the working procedures. In Section 2, The Structure of the Essay, we go through each part of the essay and give you outlines of what is to be included in an introduction, a theoretical background section, a results section, and so on. Section 3, Ethical Considerations, gives you a list of dos and don’ts related to issues such as plagiarism and research ethics (informing and seeking consent from subjects before recording them, for example). The final section, Language Aspects and Formatting, provides more details on specific language issues, such as the formality level that is expected in this type of work, grammatical pitfalls to watch out for and what formatting you should use in your essay. In the Appendix, you will find a number of useful links to documents, which you may want to consult during your studies. We hope that this compendium will be a useful companion in your work, and that it will answer most of the questions you might have.

Obviously it is not customary to provide an abstract to a compendium, but since it is our ambition that the format and structure of this compendium should reflect the format of your future essay as far as possible, we have chosen to include one anyhow.
# Table of contents

1 Course Aims, Structure and Content

1.1 Overall Aims

1.1.1 Training in scholarly work

1.1.2 Training to work independently

1.1.3 Training in writing good English

1.2 Course Structure

1.2.1 The Planning Stage (2hp)

1.2.2 The Implementation Stage (5hp)

1.2.3 The Reporting Stage (8hp)

1.3 Assessment

1.4 Advice on the Work Procedure

1.4.1 Choice of Subject

1.4.2 Research Design

1.4.3 Material

1.4.4 Secondary Sources

1.4.5 Working with your essay

2 The Structure of the Essay

2.1 The Abstract

2.2 The Introduction

2.3 Aims and Research Questions

2.4 Theoretical Framework and Previous Research

2.5 Material and Method

2.6 Results and Analysis

2.7 Discussion

2.8 Conclusion

2.9 References

2.10 Appendices

3 Scholarly and Ethical Principles

3.1 Scholarly Principles

3.2 Ethical Principles

4 Language Aspects and Formatting

4.1 Academic Style

4.2 Paragraph Structure and Cohesion

4.3 Grammatical pitfalls

4.4 Lists, Figures and Tables

4.4.1 Listing

4.4.2 Tables

4.4.3 Figures

4.5 In-text Quotations and Citations
4.5.1 Quotations ......................................................................................................................... 34
4.5.2 Paraphrasing ..................................................................................................................... 34
4.6 Abbreviations, footnotes, lists, punctuation, using italics etc. ......................................... 35
  4.6.1 Abbreviations, signs and symbols .................................................................................. 36
  4.6.2 Italic .................................................................................................................................. 36
  4.6.3 Quotation marks ............................................................................................................... 37
4.7 Formatting ............................................................................................................................ 37
  4.7.1 Margins and spacing ........................................................................................................ 37
  4.7.2 Pagination ....................................................................................................................... 38
  4.7.3 Table of contents ............................................................................................................ 38

List of References .................................................................................................................... 39

Appendix .................................................................................................................................... 40
1 Course Aims, Structure and Content

Welcome to the C-essay course in linguistics!

For some of you writing a scholarly work like this will be a new experience. and this compendium can hopefully help you on your way. It is organised in four main sections. The first section will give an overview of the structure of the course and will also give you some general advice on how to proceed with your work. In Section two, we go through the structure of a typical linguistic essay and we give guidelines as to what should be included in each section. Section three deals with research ethical issues and finally, Section four deals with language aspects and formatting details.

What follows below in this first section, is all based on the official course plan in Swedish, which can be accessed by following the link below:

http://www.umu.se/utbildning/program-kurser/kurs/?currentView=syllabus&code=1EN063

Make sure you read this document carefully before starting the course.

1.1 Overall Aims

1.1.1 Training in scholarly work

One of the chief aims of the course is to learn how to use scholarly methods in your work and in your writing, and to present your results in a way that is customary in the discipline of linguistics. A side effect of this is that your paper serves as a preparation for graduate studies. If you should wish to take higher courses (the Master’s course and graduate courses, for example), your C-paper will prepare you for more advanced research. Working on your C-paper may also indicate to you whether you are suited for doing research.

What a scholarly method is depends to a considerable extent on the kind of subject you are dealing with, but there are some basic requirements and conventions used in linguistic works that will be presented in this manual. Note also, that we do not demand that you should put forward new original theories or account for entirely new knowledge or insights. Nevertheless many papers do present some new findings. In most cases, however, the papers may be said to consist of existing theories or knowledge being applied to some new material, or of a survey in a new form of known facts.
1.1.2 Training to work independently

Your paper is supposed to be an independent work, which means two things:

Firstly, it is your responsibility to do the necessary work such as collecting material, finding literature, working on the material, organising the contents of the paper, etc. This does not mean that you are left entirely to your own devices. You will be allocated a supervisor, whom you can turn to for advice and help with the various steps in the development of your paper. Important to note here, however, is that it is up to you to signal when you need help.

Secondly, your paper should be an independent work in relation to other works in the same subject field. You have to make sure that your work does not become an imitation of previous work. Of course, you can, and should, find support for your ideas in the works of other scholars, but you must form your own opinions of the subject and make a critical examination of previous writings in the field you have chosen. Here, you should be prepared to criticise ideas that are not in accord with your own. An independent and critical attitude is a prerequisite for good scholarship.

1.1.3 Training in writing good English

Finally, another important aim of the C-paper is to give you some practice in writing good scholarly English. The general function of research is to convey new insights, findings, theories and knowledge to other people. It is therefore very important to devote a great deal of attention to the language of the paper (see Section 4 below).

1.2 Course Structure

The C-essay course is divided into three separate parts: the planning stage (2hp), the implementation stage (5hp), and the reporting stage (8hp). The successful completion of the earlier parts of the course (Planning and Implementation) is a prerequisite for starting the final part. In other words, you will not be allowed to start working on your study until you have an approved plan. Similarly, you will not be allowed to defend your final product and have it examined until you have produced and discussed an extensive (70 per cent) first draft of your essay in a work-in-progress seminar. In this seminar you also have to act opponent to one of your fellow students’ essays. More specific details are given below.
1.2.1 The Planning Stage (2hp)

After an initial introduction to the course where you will be given general guidelines and advice, it is up to you to choose a subject field and work out relevant research questions. The advantage of finding a subject on your own is that you will be interested in it and motivated to do a good job, and this is therefore better than the supervisor giving you a topic.

Once you have decided on the topic and decided what your research questions are you should formulate your ideas in a short, written project plan containing the points below:

- A brief general description of your area of interest and a formulation of “the problem”, i.e. what general question you want to answer
- A list of specific research questions you want to answer
- A description of your research material (this could be a primary text, a corpus, recordings, observations etc.)
- An indication of potentially helpful theories, critical concepts and/or secondary sources
- Questions you may have (which the group may be able to help you answer at this stage).

In order to pass this part of the course, you must have discussed your choice of subject with your supervisor and an examiner has to pass the plan. It is only then that you can start working on it. The reason for this is that your supervisor will be in a better position than you to judge whether the subject is suitable and will result in a good essay. If your supervisor asks you to modify or rejects your idea, you must try to work out an acceptable plan together.

1.2.2 The Implementation Stage (5hp)

During this stage you will be working on your essay and more information can be found under Section 1.3 below. A general piece of advice here, however, is that you get started straight away and that you draw up a clear week-by-week work plan. This will help you to avoid last minute panic. About one month before your final dead-line, you have to present your fist draft of the essay at a seminar. Of course we do not expect you to have a finished product at this stage but there should be enough for others to get a clear idea
of where the essay is heading. A rough guideline is that you should have finished your data collection and analysis by this stage and that you should have a clear idea of what theories you are basing your analysis on; this seminar is often referred to the 70% seminar, which gives an idea. Note that you will also be expected to read the works of your course peers, and that you will act as ‘opponent’ (critical friend) on one of your fellow students’ essay. Guidelines for what is expected of an opponent are given in the Appendix at the end of this compendium.

In order to pass this part of the course you have to have produced your first draft and attended the first draft seminar, where you also have to act opponent on an essay. You will not be allowed to proceed to the final opposition (see below) unless you have done this.

**1.2.3 The Reporting Stage (8hp)**

By the end of this stage you should have a final product, a complete published essay of good standard. Before this, however, there are several stages you must go through.

Firstly, you must send in a preliminary version of your final essay to your supervisor by the given date. This essay then has to be approved by your supervisor. It may be that your supervisor will ask you to amend/complement certain aspects of the essay at this stage. Secondly, once your essay has been approved, you will have to make it available to your fellow students so that they can read it and prepare for the final opposition seminar. You will in turn be asked to do the same with their essays. Finally, you have to attend the obligatory Final Seminar, where you have to defend your work, and act as an opponent on your fellow students’ essays. The final seminar follows more or less the same procedure as the 70% seminar and guidelines are given in the appendix.

After the seminar there may still be some fine-tuning of the final product based on the feed-back you have received in the seminar. Your final essay should be sent to your supervisor and you also have to upload it into DIVA, the university library database, within a week from the final opposition seminar. You will be given instructions in Moodle on how to do this. An examiner who is not your supervisor then grades your essay.
1.3 Assessment

Your paper will be assessed in accordance with the aims described above. In other words, a good paper should be an independent work, adhere to scholarly principles, be well organised, be written in good English, and follow the rules laid down for scholarly style. Your paper will thus be assessed both as a scholarly work and as a language exercise. Your essay is graded according to the following system: Fail (U), a pass (G) or a pass with distinction (VG).

More specifically the following criteria need to be demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding

For a pass the student needs to have:

• demonstrated adequate subject knowledge and a basic understanding of key concepts
• demonstrated relevant and up-to-date knowledge in the selection of research literature
• demonstrated adequate methodological knowledge

Skills and Abilities

• formulated a clear aim and plausible research questions
• chosen and used research methods based on the aim and the research questions
• collected and analysed relevant material based on the research questions
• critically discussed the presented research literature
• drawn reasonable conclusions from the results and discussed these in relation to the chosen theoretical background or scientific context
• presented and discussed his/her findings orally and in writing
• demonstrated the use of grammatically and idiomatically correct language
• demonstrated the ability to express him/herself in a stylistically correct register
• clearly defined the limitations of the study
• designed layout of the text, including references, tables and figures, in accordance with accepted conventions

Judgement and approach

• justified the choices made on the basis of scientific perspectives and, where relevant, social and/or ethical perspectives
• placed his/her study in a scientific and, where relevant, social context
• discussed the value and relevance of the study as well as its limitations in relation to the scientific and, where relevant, social context
• discussed the conclusions of the work and described how the study could be developed in a larger context

1.4 Advice on the Work Procedure

The most important thing to bear in mind when you embark on the C-essay project is that time is limited. Plan, get started straight away and stick to your dead-lines. Time flies. Below is some specific advice on aspects of the work procedure.

1.4.1 Choice of Subject

When choosing a subject, there are two important things to think of:

• definition of the subject
• delimitation of the subject

The first of these points may seem self-evident, but this is not the case. Many papers suffer from the author making a sloppy definition of the subject and, to a large extent, writing about other matters than those mentioned in the title of the paper. You should therefore think carefully about what your paper is supposed to deal with before you start working on it.

The second point is closely related to the first. A C-paper should be limited in length (see Section 2.1.2 below), which means that you will have to delimit the subject in various ways in order to be able to write a good paper. The delimitation of the subject should be made together with your supervisor, who usually has a good general knowledge of the field and can make a realistic assessment of the work that will have to be done.

1.4.2 Research Design

Time spent planning and fine-tuning the research design prior to collecting and analysing data is well spent. Not doing so may mean that you have to go back and redo things and at worst that the data you collect is useless. If, for example, you are planning to investigate gender differences in language attitudes using an online questionnaire survey, you need to control for other background variables which may be of equal
importance, such as education level, social class, age etc. If you do not take this into account in your research design, it may turn out that weeks’ of survey collecting results in useless data. What appeared to be gender differences in attitudes may in fact have been age differences or social class difference, but you have no way of telling since you forgot to include questions on these background variables in your survey! Make sure you discuss issues related to your research design that you are unsure about before collecting data etc.

1.4.3 Material
The material in your project work is basically the source from which you will collect your data, make your analysis and draw your conclusions. It is very difficult to draw up any general guidelines concerning the material since it may differ considerably from study to study; in some studies it may constitute a publically available corpus, for example, while in other cases the material may be interviews, recordings, questionnaire data or observations. Nevertheless here are some general points to note:

- **Your material must be relevant to your line of questioning.** If, for example, you are doing a study on the formality of language in English newspapers, your material must represent a cross-section of English newspapers. It would not be enough just to look at The Times in such a study.

- **Your material must be large enough to be reasonably representative.** This is of course a problem in a short essay (see below) but providing interview material from one English teacher, for example, would not constitute the basis for a study on the attitudes towards American and British English standards among Swedish teachers.

- **Your material must be limited to match the time frame of a C-essay.** If you were basing your study on transcriptions of authentic conversations, for example, it would not be realistic to include hundreds of hours of conversation as it takes at least ten hours to transcribe one hour of conversation.

- **Your material must be available should someone want to check your data.** It is, for example, not acceptable that you base your data on hearsay or vague observations that you have not provided records of.
• You must have permission to use your material from any potential parties of interest. You cannot, for example, record people without them knowing that you do so and then publish the material in an essay. The same applies when you use personal discourse collected from the Internet (from Facebook, for example). Section 3 below, deals with this issue in more detail.

Our general advice concerning material is that you try to choose material that is easy and efficient to collect and analyse, such as an online corpus or electronic text (online newspapers etc.). Remember that time is very limited and recording and transcribing naturalistic language output takes a lot of time.

The following are some useful things to think of when you are working with your material:

• Making excerpts. This means that you make extracts out of the primary sources of your paper of text passages (sentences, paragraphs, etc.) that you think will serve as useful material for the paper (illustrative examples etc.). Make sure that you include everything that may be important, for example, the full context of a sentence. You can sort out superfluous material at a later stage.

• Computer index. A good way of storing your material is to make a computer index with a special entry for each excerpt. Make sure that you state the source of the excerpt in each case, that is, the author, the title of the work and the page where the excerpt is found. By means of headlines you can easily sort and classify your entries in different ways as you work develops.

1.4.4 Secondary Sources

For the section on theoretical background and previous research you are expected to give an overview of what has been done in your field. Here you will need to consult secondary sources. Secondary sources are books or articles written by other authors dealing with the same subject field or other fields of interest for your study. It is a good idea to consult these sources at an early stage as it may help you to formulate relevant questions and with your research design.
When looking for source material it is important to know how to use the facilities of the library. There is, for example, an excellent search engine on the start page of Umeå University library. Librarians are also more than helpful if you get stuck. Don’t hesitate to consult them: http://www.ub.umu.se/

Keep in mind that a C- or D-paper is a limited assignment. You will not be expected to account for everything written about your subject field in your paper. A few representative works will normally be enough, and here you should try to use the most recent publications in your field of study.

1.4.5 Working with your essay
There are a number of stages that can be defined in the writing of your essay. These include:

- Producing an OUTLINE
- Producing a ROUGH DRAFT
- ORGANISING and POLISHING: Filling in details and organising the rough draft (adding data, structuring, ordering, exemplifying, analysing etc. etc.)
- EDITING (sorting out unnecessary data, restructuring, ordering, language editing etc.)

An outline usually includes all the headings and a few notes about what is to be included under each of these. Exactly when you should produce your outline may vary depending on what kind of subject you have chosen, but usually it should be done fairly early, because it will help you to structure the rest of your work. You may want to show your outline to your supervisor. Do not regard the outline as a holy document, which you cannot alter. This may stifle your creativity completely and make it impossible to develop your paper.

The rough draft is just that – a rough version. Don’t be afraid to include notes and comments in your text to remind yourself of ideas etc. that may not be fully developed at this stage. Be prepared to include things that you may have to change or cut out altogether in later versions. As the draft takes shape it will become clearer to you what is relevant and what is not. So it is better to be on the safe side and include more rather than less.
At a certain stage you will find that you have all the content you need and now it is time to organise and polish this material into a first draft. Don’t be afraid to cut things down and delete text. Also pay close attention to the logical flow of your text at this stage. Can the reader follow your train of thought? Are there examples to illustrate what you mean? Are the results organised in a manner that is easy to follow?

It is usually a good idea to put your essay away for a while before writing your final version. You may need to read, revise and rewrite several times before submitting your final version. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I made my argument clear?
- Are my points clearly developed with the help of a clear structure?
- Is there a logical development between the main idea of each paragraph (the topic sentence) and the rest of the paragraph?
- Is there a step missing in the argument?
- Are there any irrelevant pieces of information?
- Are there any repetitions?
- What examples have I given to support my argument?
- Are there enough examples to make the argument clear?

Edit your text in stages. Do not try to look at everything at once. Go through the text several times looking for different things systematically. For example, you may go through the text focussing on subject-verb agreement only if this this is an issue you have problems with. Then you may want to read through the text again looking at punctuation etc. etc. The main point here is that writing is a process. You simply do not sit down and write an essay from the beginning to the end in one go. There will be many versions of the text before it is finished. And finally, make sure you save and back up different versions! You never know when they may come in handy and a crashed computer is not a valid excuse for not completing your essay.
2 The Structure of the Essay

According to the course syllabus the special project comprises 15 points. This corresponds to 10 working weeks or about 400 working hours. In such a short time it is not possible to do a great deal of in-depth research on a large subject field. You must therefore concentrate on a limited task. The length of the paper may vary depending on the subject you are treating. Normally, it should be about 8 000 - 10 000 words long. It is, however, the quality of the paper rather than its quantity that is important.

The structure of the essay may vary somewhat depending on your work. However, the headings in 2.2-2.10 (which may be replaced by ones that better describe your specific work) should be used as guidelines. It is particularly important that the three main parts: Introduction (see 2.2.-2.5), Results and analysis (see 2.6-2.7), and Conclusion (see 2.8) are carefully designed so that the subject is presented in a natural and logical order to the reader. Again, remember to keep your research questions in mind throughout your work. They are supposed to help you structure your work with your data, how your data is compiled, how your analysis is made and how you eventually write your essay. Never forget that the aim of your paper is to answer the research questions you initially asked.

There is a Word template for your essay on our platform. Please use this template for your work. Page numbers should be provided (starting on the first page of your essay).

The title page should include information on the title of your essay, the name of the author (i.e. your name), autumn or spring term, year, type of project work, and the number of credits given for this course.

In the table of contents you provide the names of your headings and the starting page of each chapter. Use the Word function for formatting your table. If you use styles (Sw. Formatmallar) (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3) for your headings in your text, the programme will be able to generate your table of contents automatically.

2.1 The Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary (no more than 300 words) of the contents of your paper. Your abstract should describe your aims, your methods and your most important results. At the end of your abstract you should list of number of key words. The key words are
supposed to help people interested in similar topics find your paper. To do so they should refer to key concepts in your paper and ideally have been mentioned in your abstract.

2.2 The Introduction
Any piece of writing will have an introduction where you try to capture the interest of your audience. Traditionally, an introduction will have a funnel shape, meaning that you start with a general paragraph showing that the field that you will survey is interesting and relevant to the reader and that your own study will do something that has not been done before. Be creative and strive towards making the reader want to continue reading your essay. One way to do so is to use examples to illustrate your points. Ideally, your introduction should make the reader aware of the “problem” you are investigating and want to learn more. In the following paragraphs you then briefly summarize some of the previous research that has been conducted in the field. In the last paragraph of the introduction you position your own research in relation to what has previously been done and in what way(s) your study complements previous studies.

Tell your readers what you are going to write about in a simple and natural way. Do not refer to the title of the paper, that is, do not write e.g. “As the title indicates” or “This title says”. It is much better to start by discussing the problem you wish to shed light on.

2.3 Aims and Research Questions
The aim and research questions usually end the introduction. This is where you specifically state what the aim of your paper is and what questions exactly you want to answer. By formulating a general aim, and the specific questions you want to answer, you tell the reader both what you intend to do and why you have chosen this subject.

2.4 Theoretical Framework and Previous Research
Here you present and discuss previous research within your area of research in greater detail than in the introduction. This section should include a summary of the ideas presented in your main references. It is particularly important to identify key concepts,
which are used in the analysis, and to define these with the help of other studies or books. Key concepts are typically defined the first time they are mentioned so that the reader will know what these mean right from the beginning of the paper.

2.5 Material and Method

After introduction, aim and theoretical background it is customary to describe your method and your material. In this chapter you give a description of the material you work with, how and why you compiled it, and how you worked with it. Make sure to motivate your choice of method and material. If, for instance, you work with a corpus, you give a description of the corpus, your reasons for choosing this specific type and size of data, how your compiled your data and how you went about working with it. Simply saying that you did a corpus investigation is not enough. Your study should be described in such a way that it is replicable. Provide information on any decisions you might have made along the way. Why did you decide to use the specific methods you used and not others? What are their advantages and disadvantages? Discuss ethical considerations where relevant (see section 3).

Since the reader will read the report after the study was done, this section is normally written in the past tense. Passive voice is also often preferred to too many I:s.

2.6 Results and Analysis

This is the chapter in which you present your findings and your interpretation of them. It is very important that you discuss your findings in a systematic way and that your analysis, like the rest of your paper, really reflects your aim and research questions. Linguistic papers often deal with some material that has been collected and is presented in the form of representative examples. A careful classification of the material makes it easier to present it to the reader. What kind of classification is suitable depends to a large extent on the subject, that is, on the aim of the essay. The better you organise your paper, the better you will be able to shed light on your subject and find interesting aspects. This will make your work more stimulating and interesting both to yourself and to your readers.

If you have numbers (say, frequency of occurrence) it could be a good idea to present these as tables or figures. If you do so, make sure that your tables and/or figures
are easy to understand, that you use captions that explain the tables/figures, and that you carefully discuss your tables and/or figures in the body of the text.

Depending on the nature of your material the analysis can be presented close to the more descriptive parts, or be given a section of its own after the presentation of the raw facts. This part contains the main bulk of the paper. Here you present your material and your findings. You analyse and discuss them and try to draw conclusions related to the basic problem.

2.7 Discussion
This is the chapter where you specifically answer your research questions and discuss your results in relation to what other people have found in previous studies. Do your results and analysis concur with what has previously been said, or have you found something new? In either case, there is something to be said. Here you may also want to discuss the limitations of your study and discuss your own methods. Again, try to relate to the overall aim of your essay. At the end of this chapter you can be more personal and say something about a bigger picture – should more studies be done, for instance? Are there implications for further studies, for linguistic description, for language teaching etc? Be brave, but be accurate.

2.8 Conclusion
If the introduction and the main part of the paper have been well organised, the summary and conclusion will usually not be difficult to write. Just make a summary of the most important aspects of the paper. Tell the reader what subject you have dealt with and what results and conclusions your work has produced. Do not add new material that has not been dealt with in the main part of the paper. This part should just be a condensed account of the contents of the paper.

2.9 References
The reference section should be added after the main text at the end of your paper. All the sources mentioned in the text should be mentioned in the reference section and all sources mentioned in the reference section should be mentioned in the text.
This is NOT a numbered section. We use the APA way of referencing. Make sure you follow the guidelines in detail. Check for full stops and commas. If you Google APA referencing you will find many helpful sites. Here are two: Purdue Online Writing lab: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/
The University of New South Wales (Oz): http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref_apa.html

A book:
Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle. Location: Publisher

Article or chapter in an edited book:

Journal articles:

Online sources:
Use the same format as for other publications but also include the address from which have you retrieved the document as well as the date of access.
There are obviously many other types of sources that you may have to refer to (newspapers, interviews, television programmes etc.) and exact guidelines are given in the online resources listed above.

2.10 Appendices
Attachments such as copies of surveys, lists of raw data etc. should be included in the appendix at the very end of the essay.
3 Scholarly and Ethical Principles

The first part of this section addresses scholarly principles, essentially too large a field to be covered in a small manual, but some essential aspects will be taken up below. We will also address ethical principles, particularly important for any research that involves other fellow humans.

3.1 Scholarly Principles

Honesty and correctness are cornerstones in science and scholarship. You must never try to change reality with your views, because what you present will be false and this falsehood will easily be discovered and criticised. Do not try to suppress facts that seem to be contrary to your own line of reasoning. Present them instead and try to make use of them in your argumentation. This is particularly important when you base your study on a hypothesis (essentially an educated guess, based on loose observation). In such cases, the main aim of the paper is to find out whether this hypothesis can be verified or not when it is matched against factual data. You might, for example, formulate the hypothesis that there are shorter sentences in children’s books than in books for adults. Many writers of student papers have the erroneous idea that the paper will be a failure, if the hypothesis turns out be wrong. This is not the case at all. On the contrary, the result of a study based on a hypothesis is equally interesting and valuable, irrespective of whether the hypothesis is supported or not by the data. In the above example, it would indeed be very interesting, if it turned out to be the case that sentences on the whole are equally long in books for children and books for adults. The most important thing is simply to account for your results in an honest and correct way. So, do NOT try to manipulate your results to support your initial hypothesis.

Your conclusions should be supported by examples and convincing arguments. If you wish to present theories for which you have no good evidence, you must point out that you are making a speculation. Even if you do have certain evidence for what you claim, there is always a chance that reality is more complicated than it first appears or indeed that there are several realities. You should thus be careful of making categorical statements such as “women are more linguistically competent than men”, even if the evidence you have read supports this statement. Instead you should try to qualify and hedge your statements whenever there is any doubt of certainty. You could for example
say: “according to several studies on gender and language it appears that women on average are more linguistically competent than men” (e.g. Holmes, 1997; Cameron, 1996 and Tannen, 2000). By referring to ‘several studies’ here you are basically saying that according to what you have read this seems to be the case.

3.2 Ethical Principles

The Research Council's publication Good Research Practice is a description of the demands society places on researchers. They should be followed whenever applicable. It is also important to bear in mind that the thesis is carried out within an educational institution and that the supervisor has a responsibility that you adhere to ethical principles, so make sure you consult your supervisor if you are unsure about anything.

Here are some general guidelines on good research practice (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011:12) you should be aware of

1. You should tell the truth about your research
2. You must consciously examine and report on the starting points of your studies
3. You must disclose your methods and results
4. You must openly declare commercial interests and/or other interests
5. You must not steal research or ideas from others
6. You should keep good order in your research, through documentation and archiving
7. You should endeavour to conduct your research without harming humans, animals or the environment
8. You should be fair in your assessment of others’ research

Note that point 5 above is particularly important. Using another author’s work as if it were your own is called plagiarism, “[…] the practice of using or copying someone else’s ideas or work and pretending that you thought of it or created it.” (Cambridge English Dictionary). It is looked upon as fraudulent behaviour and students who are found to be guilty of such fraud may be reported to the Disciplinary Board. More information of how to avoid plagiarism is provided in Urkund’s Handbook on Plagiarism. Also note that your essay will be checked for plagiarism using Urkund:


Ethical principles are particularly important to think about when your research deals with the realities of others. Three special ethical requirements have thus been formulated for the Social and Human Sciences.
• **The Information Requirement:** Students should inform respondents about the conditions of participation. They should also, where possible, inform the respondents of the purpose of the study. In cases where this may affect the respondents’ behaviour, the informants can be informed about the real purpose of the study after the data has been collected, but note that respondents have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, even after the data has been collected.

• **The Consent Requirement:** The informants themselves decide over their participation. Participation should always voluntary and a participant should have the possibility cancel his/her participation at any stage of the research process before publication. If the informant is under 15 years old consent should also be obtained from legal guardians.

• **The Confidentiality Requirement:** Informants should be provided with maximum anonymity. Individuals and the information they provided should generally not be recognized by outsiders. This requirement must be observed throughout the study. Note here that it may not be enough to remove/change the respondents true names. If, for example, you are interviewing an English teacher in a school where there is only one such teacher, you also have to make sure you do not name the school in question, as it would be easy for someone to work out the true identity of the respondent.
4 Language Aspects and Formatting

Your essay should be written in formal scholarly style. This means that you must show that you are aware of organisational and typographic conventions in academic writing on linguistic questions, that your language is correct and that your focus is the topic you investigate, and NOT your own personal view on this topic. To give detailed stylistic instructions is beyond the scope of this manual. In this chapter, however, we discuss some important issues in regard to language aspects and formatting.

4.1 Academic Style

The first thing to remember when working with your paper is to always to keep the purpose of your paper in mind. The purpose is scholarly communication, that is, to convey information about your findings to your readers. This means that your topic is the most important thing and that is should always be in the focus of interest.

As a result, the style of a scholarly paper should generally be impersonal. It is your material, your analysis and your argumentation that are important, not your own person. Avoid using the pronoun I too often. Doing so creates the impression that you are more interested in yourself than in your subject. Below is an example of how you should not start your paper on, say, How Children Speak in Children’s Books:

I have been a pre-school teacher for 20 years and I have been very fond of playing with the children and of listening to the way they speak. I am very interested in children’s acquisition of language and I have read several books about this subject. I have also read many English books written for children in order to find out if the authors of these books know enough about children’s language to be able to render it correctly. In this essay I will present some of this material and I will try to judge to what extent the authors have been successful. I will also suggest other expressions when I think the authors have been wrong.
There are no grammatical errors in this passage, but the style is too personal for a scholarly paper. The reader of a scholarly text will be interested in your topic and not in why you personally became interested in this specific topic. Try to keep your uses of “I” to a minimum and simply say what you have done. In the example below, the personal touch has been played down by using passive constructions instead of all the “I” subjects. This places the topic of the paper in focus rather than the author.

This study deals with how children’s speech is rendered in children’s books in English. A comparison has been made with the theories and findings of experts on children’s language acquisition in order to find out whether authors of children’s books are able to render children’s speech correctly or not. Suggestions for improvement have been made in some cases where the expressions used by the authors are not in line with the way a small child would actually speak.

Another way to play down the personal touch is to use adverbs such as probably, possibly, or presumably instead of writing I think. Adverbs such as these will also indicate that this is what you think, but do so in a less personal way. Yet another way to hedge your claims without using I think is to say that something seems to be a certain way.

The Swedish pronoun man may be rendered in different ways. The English pronoun one used to be very common in scholarly style, but is now considered somewhat stiff and dated. The pronoun you is typical of spoken English and should be avoided in scholarly writing. The passive is often a good English equivalent of man.

You can improve the quality of your paper to a great extent by writing it in good English. Writing as good English as possible is not an end in itself. Remember that the purpose of the paper is scholarly communication.

4.2 Paragraph Structure and Cohesion
Your paper should be divided into chapters, each of which should have a good descriptive and relevant heading. In each chapter the material is presented in accordance with the principles discussed above. In each chapter there are often several large
sections with their own subheadings. A common method of clarifying the division is to number the chapters, for example

1. Our most common domestic animals
   1.1. Cats
   1.2. Dogs

Each section may also have numbered subsections:

1.1.1 The eating habits of dogs

You should not, however, use this type of numbering too much, because too many numbered sections of subsections will make an absurd impression.

It is important that your writing is **coherent**. That is, your writing should be logically developed and connected so that it forms a clear argument. This means that the coherence of your essay relies on how clearly the ideas are linked to each other – how they are structured into logical units. The most common way of presenting one’s material is in the form of **paragraphs**.

A paragraph is a series of sentences unified by one controlling idea or topic. It should usually begin with a sentence that presents the main idea – a topic sentence. Each paragraph deals with one thought or idea - a topic. Once a reader reads your topic sentence, s/he should know what the argument or purpose of the paragraph is. The following sentences then extend, develop and support the topic sentence (e.g. by giving examples and supporting evidence). The whole idea of a paragraph is that it allows the writer to develop a topic in a logical way, and helps the reader to see what ideas in an argument go together. This means that every sentence in a paragraph should be clearly related to the main idea of the topic sentence, and that the paragraph should only contain ideas and sentences that directly relate to this main idea – irrelevant ideas are not wanted! Think about a paragraph as a mini-essay – the organisation within a paragraph works like the organisation of an essay. When you start a new paragraph, you signal to the reader that you are moving on to a new topic or a new aspect of the topic.
The ordering of the presentation of your thoughts or ideas is very important. The smallest logical unit is the **sentence**. Sentences which relate to the same idea form **paragraphs** and paragraphs which develop similar aspects of an idea (may) form **sections**. All the paragraphs (or sections) finally, are linked by the underlying topic – your aim and research questions. You should deal with only one main idea at a time.

The most common way of signalling that you are starting a new paragraph is by using indentation. Each paragraph begins on a new line with the first line of text indented (no skipped lines). This is what is preferred. However, the first line of each new section (below a heading or subheading) should not be indented. When using this system, do not begin on a new line unless you want to begin a new paragraph! The other option is to signal the beginning of a new paragraph with a space between lines. This is called block paragraphing.

A new paragraph should be felt to be a logical sequel to and development of what has been said in the previous paragraph. Make the logical links between sentences and paragraphs clear by using transitional words or phrases such as:

- **furthermore**
- **moreover**
- **thus**
- **in addition**
- **to begin with**
- **in other words**
- **as an example**
- **however**
- **nevertheless**
- **yet**
- **in spite of this**

- **admittedly**
- **fortunately**
- **naturally**
- **undoubtedly**
- **as a result**
- **therefore**
- **for this reason**
- **consequently**
- **on the other hand**
- **similarly**
- **in comparison**
- **in contrast**

- **finally**
- **lastly**
- **in conclusion**
- **in sum**
- **to conclude**
- **to sum up, etc.**
Grammatical pitfalls

Grammatical errors and incorrect expressions should be avoided. If your language is full of them, you will make it very hard, or sometimes even impossible, for the reader to understand what you intend to say. Try to avoid situations where you have to hurry too much to finish on time. This will always result in language mistakes. Try to devote a great deal of time and thought to the style and grammar of your paper. We strongly advise you to make sure that your language is correct before submitting your draft to your supervisor. He or she will have a limited number of hours to help you. Using his/her time on things you should already know instead of on helping you with more complex and difficult issues is not time wisely spent. Always read, revise and edit your drafts and final versions of the essay carefully before submitting them. Pay specific attention to “Swenglish” expressions. Always think and write in English. Writing in Swedish and then translating into English is something you should never do.

There are also many false friends, that is, words and phrases that resemble Swedish expressions but mean something else in English. Always look up words, phrases and grammatical constructions in dictionaries, synonym books and grammars etc. Go through your manuscript systematically and check a number of grammatical points, for example:

- **Subject-verb agreement**: does the verb have the correct form with respect to the person and number of the subject?

- **English equivalents of Swedish ska/skulle**. A common mistake is to use *should* in expressions where other English equivalents must be used.

- **Aspect**, that is, simple tenses or progressive forms.

- **Adjective or Adverb**. Check what grammatical function the word in question has and make sure you use the correct form. For example
1. The weather seems **bad**. (*bad* is an adjective, because it functions as a subject complement here).

2. The demonstration was **badly** organised. (*badly* is an adverb, because it functions as a manner adverbial here).

e. **Tense.** Remember the differences between Swedish and English in the use of tenses.

f. **Word order:** Using Swedish inverted word order (verb - subject) instead of English straight word order (subject - verb) after initial adverbs or in a main clause placed after a subordinate clause is a common and very irritating mistake. Cf.

   1. Efter några månader **hade han** förlorat alla sina pengar.

   2. After a few months **he had** lost all his money.

You should also think of the position of long adverbial phrases in English. They cannot be placed between the subject and the verb, as in Swedish.

### 4.4 Lists, Figures and Tables

#### 4.4.1 Listing

Sometimes you will need to make some kind of list to present the material, for example sentences or statements to be discussed or a list of components or a summary of results. The items of such a list are often marked by means of “bullets, that is “•” (it is then called “a bulleted list”, as in the following example:

So far we have established that central adjectives have the following characteristics:

- attributive use
- predicative use after the copula **seem**
- premodification by **very**
- comparison

#### 4.4.2 Tables
An effective way of presenting numerical data is by means of various types of tables. **Cross-tabulation** is often used to present the number of occurrences of some phenomenon. The categories studied are presented vertically and their frequency of occurrence in different sources are listed horizontally, as exemplified in Table 1 below, which also shows the percentages of the items.

### Table 1. The distribution of count-nouns (CNs) and noncount-nouns (NCNs) in the texts examined (note that captions for tables are placed above the table itself)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Text 1</th>
<th>Text 2</th>
<th>Text 3</th>
<th>Text 4</th>
<th>∑</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNs</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCNs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∑</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is often necessary to analyse, explain or comment on the table, in particular when the data seem strange for some reason. Why are there for example only 2 count-nouns in text 3, but no fewer than 107 in text 4? This is something you have to explain. (Perhaps Text 3 deals with terms for metals: *gold, silver, iron*, etc., which are noncount nouns, while text 4 is about terms for vehicles: *car, bus, bicycle, motorcycle*, etc., which are count-nouns).

### 4.4.3 Figures

Various types of diagrams, figures and pictures (all referred to as Figures in the body of your text) may be used to illustrate and clarify what is said in the text. There are many types of charts and diagrams. These may be used to illustrate complex arguments or relations, show how different quantities are related, illustrate how various kinds of processes may give rise to another or represent the development of some phenomenon over time etc.

Figures of various kinds are often to illustrate linguistic relations or to illustrate relations between linguistic expressions and their referents. Figure 1 symbolises Aitchison’s (1987, p.64) “cobweb” theory about the relations between words in the human mind.
Figure 1. *The mental network of words* (note that captions for figures are placed under the figure)

Figure 2 is an illustration of the different relations expressed by the phrase *in back of* when applied to lifeless objects without an intrinsic front and to people (who have an intrinsic front) respectively (see Langacker 1995, p.95). (VP = vantage point). Pictures are not used very often in linguistic works, but may be very useful, if you wish to illustrate a particular point.

Remember that tables, diagrams, figures and pictures are all supposed to serve as visual support for the written text. Be careful not to make diagrams or pictures that are so complicated and difficult to understand that they actually produce the opposite effect.
4.5 In-text Quotations and Citations
When writing a paper you often have to refer to what other writers have said about various aspects of the subject. There are various ways of doing this.

4.5.1 Quotations
Quotations are exact renderings of the original text and they have to be clearly indicated using quotation marks (unless they are longer than 40 words – see below). Quotations should be carefully introduced, carefully referred to (including page number), and carefully discussed. Do not quote to show that you have read something – a quotation should be an indication of the fact that something very important is being said in the section and often in such a way that it is difficult to rephrase it:

As Cameron (2006) quite perceptively points out, “language is not simply a vehicle for other ideological processes but is itself shaped by ideological processes” (p.141).

When you quote reproduce the original exactly, including any mistakes that may be there. You can signal the fact that you are aware of mistakes by placing a [sic] (it says so) after the mistake.

If quotes are longer than 40 words, you give it in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and do not use quotation marks. The quoted text should be set in slightly smaller font with shorter distance between lines. The text is usually indented 1.0 cm from the left hand margin. There should be extra space before and after to help identify the quote. Given the importance it should also be discussed afterwards and not just left for the reader to contemplate. For an example see below:

Language diversity must be placed within a sociopolitical context. That is, more consequential than language difference itself are questions of how language diversity and language use are perceived by schools [and teachers], and whether or not modifications are made in the curriculum. (Nieto, 2002, p.87)

4.5.2 Paraphrasing
Although you sometimes have to quote authors’ exact words, paraphrasing what someone has said is the most usual way to refer to others’ work. When you paraphrase make sure you rewrite the information in your own words (not doing so is considered to be plagiarism). There are two ways of referring to authorship when paraphrasing. Preferably, you should try to integrate the reference source into the natural flow of the
text. By using phrases such as *according to, as suggested by, as implied by xxx’s findings* etc. this is easily achieved. The quote above, for example, could be referred to like this when integrated into the text: According to Cameron (2006, p. 141) there is a mutual relationship between ideology and language. Both affect each other.

At times, especially when you referring to several studies, it is difficult to integrate the authorship into the actual text. In such cases simply use parenthesis at the end of the sentence with the relevant source information: There are several studies that discuss the relationship between language-in-education policies and pedagogical, economic and political factors (Prophet & Badede, 2006, p.240; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004, p.68; Laversuch, 2008, p. 375). Full details of all references should be given in your list of references (see above).

### 4.6 Abbreviations, footnotes, lists, punctuation, using italics etc.

Footnotes are used to present material of some interest, which is not directly connected with the argumentation in the main text. It may be some extra information, a qualification of a statement in the text, or an objection or a counter-argument to a claim made by some other author, etc.; cf. the following example:

...The Krio way of doing this [...] is to insert an auxiliary aspect marker, *de*¹, in a position immediately preceding the main verb. (Nordlander 1997:112)

Be very restrictive with the use of footnotes. What is really of interest to the reader can usually be presented in the main text. Notes are given *consecutive numbers* (1, 2, 3, etc.) throughout the whole text and should be presented directly on the text page. Choose this option in your word processing program.

---

¹ Krio *de* is probably derived from the the English locative adverb *there*. 
**4.6.1 Abbreviations, signs and symbols**

When writing a paper you will often find it necessary to use a number abbreviations, signs and symbols. If you do, you should make a list of them somewhere at the beginning of the paper, for example at the end of the introduction. Explain what each abbreviation or symbol stands for. A common procedure is to abbreviate the titles of standard works such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* = the OED, or *Engelsk universitetsgrammatik* = EUG. Alternatively, you can put such abbreviations together with the full title in the bibliography; for example:


Some standard Latin abbreviations are often used in scholarly papers: *i.e.* (= ‘that is’), *cf.* (= ‘compare’) and *e.g.* (= ‘for example’). Like all other Latin terms, these should be written in *italics*. Notice also that *e.g.* is only used in front of a *linguistic example*, as in:

Stative verbs, *e.g.* own and possess, are not used in the progressive.

When you wish to give a non-linguistic example, you should write “for example”, as in:

Many cities, for example Manchester and Leeds, have grown rapidly in recent years.

**Signs and symbols** should be listed in the introduction. Here are some common examples:

* An asterisk signifies that what follows it is ‘not good English’, ie an unacceptable usage: *the car of John*

( ) Optional items: but he didn’t (do so)

/ or {} Choice of items: Did anybody/somebody phone?

**4.6.2 Italics**

*Italics* are used for the following purposes:

(a) To mark words or phrases that you are discussing or analysing, as in:

*Any* has not been the subject of much analysis from a phonological point of view.

(b) To mark titles of published works (when the whole work is mentioned. Such works are for example books, newspapers, journals, periodicals, films, web sites, etc.:
Like *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Catcher in the Rye* is a picaresque novel about initiation into manhood.

### 4.6.3 Quotation marks

Quotation marks are used, as mentioned above, to enclose quotations in the main text. Quotation marks are also used in source references, when the source is part of a larger work, for example a chapter in a book, an article in an anthology or conference volume, a poem in a collection of poems, etc. As an alternative to quotation marks (" - "), **inverted commas** (‘ - ’) are often used instead, especially in British texts. You can use either of these methods as long as you are consistent. Cf. the following examples:

The novel is divided into two parts, ‘Power and Light’, and ‘The Education of a Worker’.


In the bibliography you give the title of both the article and the volume in which it is published:


Inverted commas are also used to indicate the **meaning** of a word or phrase, as in: *Some* is stressed when it means ‘only a small quantity (or number)’ or ‘a certain’.

### 4.7 Formatting

Below is some information on formatting such as margins, text type and size, distance between lines etc.

#### 4.7.1 Margins and spacing

Use 3-cm left and right hand margins. This will give enough room for your supervisor's comments. Remember to use 1,5 spacing for the main text and single spacing for indented quotations, tables and diagrams, footnotes and the bibliography.
4.7.2 Pagination
Do not forget to paginate, that is, to number your pages beginning with the page after the table of contents.

4.7.3 Table of contents
The table of contents should be as detailed as possible, so that the reader can easily find different chapters or sections. Write your table of contents when you have finished your essay. This is an example of what it may look like with the titles of chapters in capital letters and those of sections in small letters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The language in the Moomin books</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creating a table (by means of the Table menu) will make it easier for you to make it look nice.
List of References


Appendix

Link to course plan:
http://www.umu.se/utbildning/program-kurser/kurs/?currentView=syllabus&code=1EN063

Umeå University Library:
Note that once you are logged into CAS you have direct access to all online journals:
http://www.ub.umu.se/

APA referencing guidelines:

Purdue Online Writing lab:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/

The University of New South Wales (Oz):
http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref_apa.html

Urkund handbook on plagiarism:

God forskningsed:
http://www.vr.se/download/18.3a36c20d133af0e12958000491/1340207445825/God+forskningssed+2011.1.pdf