The BA paper in English linguistics

How to research, write, and format your paper

Maria Wiktorsson

Svetlana L'Nyavskiy

Updated version of original by

Jean Hudson

Contents

1 Introduction

Doing research is both challenging and enjoyable, but it can be difficult to know where to start. The best way to approach a project is to break it down into its component parts. These are, in chronological order:

a)   What do I want to find out?

b)   What have other researchers in the field discovered?

c)   How will I contribute to the scientific conversation regarding this matter? Do I have anything new to say about the subject of my research?

d)   What shall I do to answer my research question(s)?

e)   What answers did my research produce? How/where/why am I joining the scientific conversation regarding this matter?

f)   How shall I interpret these answers in relation to the discoveries of previous researchers?

g)   How shall I present my research so that it adheres to the norms of the discipline within which I am working?

The aim of this document is to guide you through this process as you work towards your BA thesis in the field of Linguistics.

Before we proceed, however, our most important piece of advice is that you choose a topic that arouses your curiosity and if possible one that might suit your future plans. You will, after all, be living with it for three months!

2 The research process

This section is about the content and quality aspects of research, covering the first five of the questions posed above. The last question (g) is addressed in section 3. In relation to the first question, it is very important to consider what "to find out" means as this is a very important notion for you as a junior researcher. You may have an opinion about the matter in question. You also may have formed a certain attitude about the problem that does not let you sleep! However, you need to 'find out' if it is the case. You need to read extensively about the subject of your research, collect the data, and let your data speak to you. In the process, you will find out if your knowledge is supported by the data. You may find out that your knowledge is not supported by your data. What you should avoid by all means is to "cherry pick" the data fragments that support your opinion.

2.1 Topic, aim, and research question(s)

It is important to define a realistic aim, one that is interesting and relevant to the subject of English linguistics and (last but not least) one that can be achieved in the time allotted. Always discuss your ideas with your supervisor and make sure that they approve your aim and research questions before you go ahead with your project.

The distinction between topic, aim and research question is related to degrees of specificity, as the following example from an old student paper shows.

Topic	Legislation on abortion in the US
Aim	Analyze and compare the discourse of abortion on both sides of a debate on partial-birth abortion.
Research questions	1. What are the discourse strategies used on both sides of the debate in the Senate leading up to the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003? 2. How do the strategies of those who voted for the ban compare with those who voted against it?

Note that specific research questions can relate to quite different topics or aims. In the example above, the topic might well have been 'Democratic and Republican discourses in the US Senate'. The topic is the general sphere of interest that you want to know more about and it is important that you establish this before you dig deeper and formulate your aim and research question(s). The aim is the actual problem you want to investigate. Take, for example, the aim 'How many words are there in the English language?' - not only is this question impossible to answer, but it is also difficult to think of an interesting and relevant topic area in which to embed the question.

If your topic, aim, and research question(s) are clear and unambiguous, you will be in a position to carry out a well-defined and focused study. Conversely, if you start off with unclear aims and questions, you will sooner or later realise that you have lost track of what you are actually doing.

2.2 Background research: What?

Once you have established your aim and research question, you need to identify and research relevant fields of study in order to demonstrate that you are aware of what other researchers have done before you. This background research can be divided into three categories: Situational, Theoretical, and Specific. We shall look at each of these different kinds of background in turn. Note that you do not need to write them as separate sections as they are all interconnected.

Situational background

Some studies - especially (but not exclusively) those involving critical discourse analysis - require a broader orientation. If you are comparing voices for and against a particular issue, for example, then you may also need to provide information on the societal, historical, or political background to the issue.

All studies need to include both theoretical background and specific background.

Theoretical background

It is not sufficient to simply carry out an investigation and report the results. Your research must be theoretically grounded. This means that you need to relate the theories underpinning your research to your particular research questions. You also need to explain why and how

those theories help answering your research question(s). In addition you must evaluate your results in light of the theory or theories you use in your thesis. If, for example, you are investigating the representation of a particular group of people in media discourse, you need to consider theories of representation or media discourse. If you are researching attitudes to second language learning in schools, you should anchor your research in theories of L2 acquisition, language learning/teaching, or motivation theory.

Your choice of methodology is also a theoretical concern. Therefore, briefly introduce and justify your choice of methodology and relate it to your theoretical background and research questions. (Note that this is <u>not</u> the place for a detailed description of how you conducted your research; that belongs under the heading 'Design of study' - see below.)

Specific background

By 'specific background' we mean **previous work** on the same or a similar topic, or using similar theories and methodology. The first thing you need to find out is whether anybody has already posed the same research question(s) as you, or a closely related one. Did they use the same theories as you but different data or method? Did they use the same method and/or material as you? Can you propose a new way to approach the subject? It is essential that you investigate these questions and that you map out the knowledge base around your own aim and research questions. It is useful to know whether anyone has posed a similar question using a different research method or, conversely, used the same research method to pose a different but related question.

Taken together, these three approaches to background research will enable you to identify and describe the field within which you are working and to position yourself in that field.

2.3 Background research: How?

Always base your background research on academic sources. The surest (but not the only) way to recognise an academic text is that it has been published in a peer-reviewed scientific/academic journal. Beware especially of internet publications from special interest groups posing as academic institutions. If in doubt, consult a librarian or your supervisor. Wikipedia does not count as an academic source.

Libraries and library databases

Our librarians are trained to help you find the best sources, and there will be a special session with a librarian during the course. Do not miss this opportunity. Students consistently attest to the value of these sessions.

Internet searches

As anyone who's ever put off a term paper will tell you, good research takes time. If you are writing an academic paper, start in a library database, looking for peer-reviewed academic sources. It is a risky temptation to start with Google instead.

Dennis G. Jerz[1]
Mount St. Mary's University (PA)

The web is an amazing source of information, but using it for academic research puts great demands on the researcher's ability to evaluate the quality of that information. We found the following, very sound advice on *Jerz's Literacy Weblog*:

An internet search engine will show you...
- newspaper or magazine articles (written by professional writers who are not experts in the subject matter, such as brain surgery or international politics),
- commercial or activist web pages (written by people who are trying to sell you a thing or an idea, and have no interest in being fair to alternative opinions),
- instructional web pages (such as this one) or student projects (neither of which have gone through the peer review process)
- spoof web pages that are posted by pranksters; or creative works that imitate scholarly websites

An internet search engine won't necessarily show you...
- meticulously-researched articles,
- written by full-time researchers (who spend several months on each article, while a journalist may have to write several different stories each day),
- screened by an academic journal's panel of experts, and
- published as a service to the academic community.

This said, it is also true that some internet resources, such as Google Scholar, now provide access to scholarly material that was previously difficult to obtain other than through inter-library loan or – at worst – expensive trips to international libraries. This is particularly true in the case of research involving access to early manuscripts, publications, or private collections.

What is increasingly important for researchers today is an ability to critically evaluate internet sources. This will be discussed during the research paper course, but if in doubt you should consult your supervisor.

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[1] Retrieved 14 Feb 2016 from: http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic1/research-essays-evaluating-online-sources/

Other ways to proceed

- Talk to the human being working the reference desk at the library. (If it is currently 2 am and your paper is due tomorrow, this is not an option, so remember to plan your time in advance.)

- Use the databases that are accessible via the university library. For Linguistics your first port of call should be: *MLA International Bibliography* and *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA)*.

- Another approach is to find a recent academic article that seems at least somewhat related to your topic. For example, if you are researching gender aspects in advertising, you might find a review of a recent scholarly book on the language of advertising. If so, plunder the 'References'. Even if the article itself is of little use to you, it may point you towards books or other articles that will be more valuable. (If there is no list of works cited, then you are not reading an academic source.)

- Walk to that section of the library that has books on your topic, and look on the shelf for similar books. Open each book up and scan the table of contents; if you're looking for something in particular, scan the index. If a book looks promising, set it aside; otherwise, put it back and keep looking. Checking out indexes is a good way of gathering key words and combinations of key words, which you can use to scan databases for sources.

<div align="right">

Retrieved 14 Feb 2016 from:

http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic1/research-essays-evaluating-online-sources/

(Slightly adapted to suit these guidelines for writing in linguistics.)

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Make notes and keep track of references

Always make notes as you are reading; it is these notes that will enable you to eventually construct your 'Background' section. Be very careful to distinguish between paraphrases and quotations:

- A **paraphrase** is a synthesis, in your own words, of another author's ideas.

- A **quotation** is an exact copy of an author's words; it must be surrounded by quotation marks. In general, you should avoid quotations, saving them for occasions when only the other author's words are good enough.

Both paraphrases and quotations <u>must</u> be accompanied by in-text references. It is therefore absolutely crucial that you keep track of these references when you are taking notes during your reading of background material. This will save you a great deal of work later on. It will also help you avoid accidental plagiarism. (There is a separate section on plagiarism, below. Read it very carefully.)

Apart from paraphrases and quotations, your notes will also include thoughts of your own as you gather more and more knowledge on the topic of your research. You should mark these as being distinct from the voice of other authors.

2.4   Planning and carrying out your own research project

In the previous sections we have outlined what you need to know and do before you embark on your own investigation. In real life, however, the research process is circular and involves a certain amount of back-tracking, adjustment, and revision. For example, you will have

thought about your **data** and **method** at a very early stage, when you presented your project outline at the beginning of the course. You might have revised one or the other of these two crucial components based on new insights gained while carrying out your background research. You might have carried out a small pilot project at an early stage and realized that your choice of data was not adequate. But there comes a point when you must make definitive choices with respect to your data and method. Here are some important questions that must be answered before you carry out your investigation:

Data

- Will I find answers to my research question(s) using these data?
- Are the data accessible?
- How will I collect the data?
- How much data do I need?
- Do I have the necessary permissions to collect the data?
- Do I have enough time to collect the data that I need?
- Are there any ethical or societal rules that constrain my use of these data?

The kind of data that you collect is dependent on your aim and choice of methodology. But whatever your data, see to it that you collect enough, and of the right kind. You must keep a very careful record of how and from where you have acquired the data. What this entails is dependent on your methodology. Always check with your supervisor before you collect your data, to avoid unnecessary mistakes and a great waste of time. You need to be explicit about your data selection and include clear information about sources, locations, time periods, etc. Sometimes you can use a small data set with high impact and rich interpretation possibilities. In cases like this, you need to explain how this kind of data set could be realiable and sufficient.

Method

- Why am I using this method as opposed to any other? (The answer to this question relates to the discussion in your 'Theoretical background' - see above.)
- Am I sufficiently acquainted with this method, or do I need to read up on it?
- Does the method require any specialized technical equipment and, if so, is this available to me?

In this section, you need to provide your reader with information about the concrete application of selected features of your methodological approach to answer your research questions. You should not write a general introduction of to the methodology but focus the aspects employed in the study. For instance, you do not need to account for the history of Corpus Linguistics but you should instead focus on the specific analytical tools used in your study. Always reference terminology, concepts and definitions! Your data and method choices will be the subject of discussion in several seminars as well as in individual sessions with your supervisor. Do take advantage of these opportunities to air your thoughts and queries.

2.5 The investigation

The detail of how you should proceed with your investigation depends entirely on your method, data, aim, etc (which you should discuss with your supervisor), but we can offer a few words of general advice that are applicable to any investigation.

- Consider doing a small pilot study to test the robustness of your method. For example, with questionnaires and interviews you could start with a few participants and then ask them to comment on the procedure: Were any of the questions ambiguous or unclear? Also, check that you, the researcher, can adequately use the responses to answer your research question(s): Are any of the questions too vague or general? If you are using corpus methods, do not wait until you have a huge amount of data, but make trial searches along the way. You might find that you need to

- Keep a diary of your work, making note of any observations or thoughts you might have along the way. What might seem to be a trivial observation one day could well turn out to be a major insight three weeks later! But even if this does not happen, a diary helps to keep you grounded and can be very useful when you start to write up your results and discussion.

- If any of your findings are in the form of lists or tables, store these electronically (using Excel, for example). This will save you a lot of time and effort at the writing up stage.

2.6 Interpreting your results

The nature of results varies according to data and methodology but here, too, we can offer some universal guidelines:

- Identify the most salient results and distinguish them from those which apply in certain cases only.

- Do not ignore negative results, such as those which do not conform to your expectations.
- Consider your results in relation to:
    a) your own research question(s),
    b) the theoretical background upon which your work is based, and
    c) the work of other scholars in your field.

In other words, it is not sufficient to merely state your results. You must analyze your findings and discuss them in relation to the findings of other researchers in your field.

Take advantage of every opportunity to discuss your results with both your peers and your supervisor, in seminars and meetings.

3   The writing process

In this section we turn our attention to the thesis itself, which is the written documentation of your research project. At a very early stage in the course you will be asked to submit a one-page outline comprising: aim, research questions, data, and method. It is this document that you will then build upon, brick by brick, until you have a complete thesis.

There are various sources to use for support in the writing process.
Malmö University has a writing centre which can offer support:
https://student.mau.se/en/student-services/the-writing-centre-and-support/
Lund University has an Academic writing online resource available through:
https://www.awelu.lu.se/

3.1 Attribution

Think of your thesis as an on-stage conversation between yourself and all the other scholars whose findings and ideas have influenced you and whose work you have drawn upon in the process of carrying out your own research project. Throughout your paper, but especially in the 'Background', you must make sure that the reader knows whose voice you are using: your own or that of another author. The tool that scholars use to signal who is speaking at any given moment is *in-text referencing*. Failure to attribute sources correctly and fully, whether intentional or unintentional, is *plagiarism*.

3.1.1 Referencing

Using in-text referencing to integrate sources into your own text can be quite challenging for the first-time writer of an academic thesis. The Harvard University has an excellent online guide on using and [integrating sources](#)[2] that is freely available. If you use this resource to the full, you will have no problems with in-text referencing.

At the end of the paper (under the heading 'References') you must list your sources in alphabetical order. List *all* and *only* sources that you have referred to in the paper, in alphabetical order.

Each academic discipline has its own rules on how to present references. In linguistics, references often follow the APA style (sometimes with a couple of slight deviations). You will find examples of how to reference different types of sources in the Appendix to these guidelines. For a comprehensive overview of how to reference in APA style, we recommend the [APA guidelines on referencing](#)[3].

3.1.2 Plagiarism

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary offers the following, simple definition of *[plagiarism](#)*: 'the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person'. This might sound straightforward - and it is, as far as deliberate plagiarism is concerned - but the greatest problem by far is how to avoid **accidental plagiarism**. We have already flagged this issue in section 2.3, on note-taking: the first step in avoiding accidental plagiarism is to keep careful track of where your notes come from. Never, ever make a note without adding the source! Later, when you are writing up your 'Background' section, you need to pay special attention to referencing your sources (see previous section).

We strongly recommend the [Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#),[4] which covers all you need to know in order to avoid accidental plagiarism.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Plagiarism, intentional or otherwise, is a violation of the academic code of conduct. It can lead to disciplinary action and even expulsion from the university.

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[2] https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/integrating-sources
[3] https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references
[4] https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/using-sources

3.2 Structure

The BA thesis in linguistics should be about 8,000 words long (approximately 20-25 pages), excluding 'Table of Contents', 'Abstract', 'References', and 'Appendices'. Your paper should be organised in the following way:

Title page
Table of contents
Abstract
1   Introduction & Aim
2   Background
3   Design of the present study
4   Results
5   Discussion
6   Concluding remarks
References
Appendices (optional)

These headings are first-level headings which indicate the function of the sections in relation to the whole text. Each section may in turn be further subdivided into subsections that are content-related. The sections and subsections should be numbered as they are in the document that you are reading now. (Note that only the main sections are numbered, as in the list above.)

The internal structure of each section - indeed, each paragraph - should proceed from the most general observations to the more specific details. Pay attention to signposting between sections and paragraphs, that is: use logical connectors to let the reader know what to expect as they proceed through the text.

The content of each section follows logically from the title of the section, but here are some additional comments on each of them in turn.

Title page

Please use the template provided in Canvas. (Frontpage BA thesis template.docx)

Table of contents

List your sections and subsections (2 levels only) with page references. Make sure that these are coherent with the section titles and numbers in the main body of your thesis, especially if you have revised these between submissions.

Abstract

The abstract, which is a highly condensed version of your paper, should be 150-200 words long. If you are unsure about how to write an abstract, check Philip Koopman's (Carnegie Mellon University) 'How to Write an Abstract'.[5]

Introduction & Aim

This is where you introduce your topic, give some background information to arouse the reader's interest, and give reasons why you find the subject of your paper worth writing about. Conclude by stating the aim(s) of your study, followed by your specific research question(s).

Background

In this section you will demonstrate your acquaintance with the field in which your study is positioned (see sections 2.2 and 2.3, above). You must integrate the information you take from outside sources so that it reads like a coherent argument, rather than a bunch of paragraphs strung together from various sources. Make sure that the contents of the section are relevant to your aims and research questions, and resist the temptation to overload it with superfluous information.

Design of the present study

This section should contain a description of your data, method, scope, and (if relevant) limitations. State the size of your data. Describe your method of collecting data as well as the advantages and/or limitations of your material. Consider whether your choice of data is likely to affect the results in some important way. Then state along what lines your investigation will be conducted. Define any unfamiliar terms, and explain any abbreviations you intend to use, if this has not been done elsewhere (for example, in an appendix). If your investigation is long and complex, give a step-by-step description of what you intend to do.

Results

Make your presentation as clear as possible and concentrate on one aspect at a time, starting with the most general observations and moving on to more specific findings. You will probably need to divide this section into several subsections, in which case you should explain

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[5] https://users.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html

this at the beginning of the section. Long and complicated sections should have a short summary at the end.

If you make a quantitative study of some linguistic phenomenon, it is often best to present your data in tables. A good way to start is to draw up your table first, and then go on to describe the data you present in the tables. Note that you cannot just give data in tables. Comments and exemplification are required in the text with reference to the tables.

Whether your investigation is quantitative or qualitative, make ample use of examples from your material so that the reader can follow your reasoning.

Discussion

The discussion section explains and interprets the results. You should discuss your findings in relation to your theoretical background and the results of previous work as presented in the 'Background' section.

Depending on the nature of your study, it might be advisable to conflate the 'Results' and 'Discussion' sections. Discuss this with your supervisor.

Concluding remarks

Give a general summary of your results and state the conclusions you can draw on the basis of them. If some of your results are inconclusive, e.g. because you have not had enough material, say so. You should also indicate what aspects or areas might be interesting for further study. And, finally: Never introduce a new topic or insight into the conclusion.

References

List your sources in alphabetical order. List *all* and *only* sources that you have referred to in the paper, in alphabetical order. (See section 3.1.1 for more information on the technicalities of referencing.)

Appendix (optional)

Use this heading for lists of abbreviations, questionnaires that you have handed out to informants, lists (e.g. abbreviations used), or large tables which you want the reader to be able to use for reference purposes but which are too cumbersome to include in the body of the text. If you have more than one, call them: Appendix 1, Appendix II, etc. Do not paginate the Appendices (or Appendixes, as they are often referred to nowadays).

3.3 Style

Traditions in academic writing vary across the globe and between disciplines, so the question of what is and what is not good academic style is a difficult one to answer. For example, many writers are under the impression that complex sentences are essential in academic writing. This is not so. Every discipline has its technical terms, of course, but these can be used (and clarified) in an accessible style. In the following list we offer just a few words of advice on how to write good academic prose.

- Be clear, concise, and straightforward. Avoid long, complex sentences with several subordinate clauses (unless you are quite confident that you are in command of them).
- Please adhere to academic writing standards by avoiding informal language, opinions and judgments.
- Use standard spelling and grammar. Before you submit any written work, use the grammar and spell checking tools in your word processor.
- Take care with technical terms that are also used in everyday language. One example is the word *phrase* which, to the non-linguist, simply denotes 'a group of words'. Define and reference all technical terms, and make it clear to the reader how you are using the term.
- Pronoun use (I): Do not shy away from using the first person pronoun *I.* This shows that you take responsibility for your work. Earlier rules demanding the consistent use of the passive voice are outdated, as is the use of *we* when there is only one author.
- Pronoun use (II): Do not use the informal *you*, as in: *Neither qualitative interviews nor focus groups are likely to **give you** easily quantifiable, factual or objective data.* An appropriate rephrasing of this would be: *Neither qualitative interviews nor focus groups are likely to **provide** easily quantifiable, factual or objective data*.
- Pronoun use (III): The 3rd person singular, gender neutral pronoun in English is *they* (*them, their, themself*). See also the APA guidelines on Singular "They"[6].

The best way to improve your style is to consciously take note of how good writers write! If you read a journal article or book chapter that is not only interesting in terms of its content but also very accessible (as in 'easy to read'), take time to analyze the writing style and the structure of the text and then practise writing in a similar way.

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[6] https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they

3.4 Layout

Once you are satisfied with the content of your thesis, you need to pay attention to its appearance. There are two reasons why appearance matters:

- Firstly, there is the issue of clarity and readability. For example, if you re-format a text so that there are twice as many words on each page and no margins you see how difficult it is to read.

- Secondly, it is a matter of identity. Every discipline has its own standards and expectations from a scholarly text. Style guides such as APA, MLA, Harvard, etc, include instructions on how to lay out the text on the page. (This is rather like dress conventions for different occasions - you can disregard them, but you might find yourself being treated as an outsider.)

Here are the conventions that apply for your BA thesis (as used in the document that you are reading now):

Typeface

Times New Roman (or similar), 12 points.

Margins

Leave wide margins (about 2.5 cm on all four sides).

Line spacing: 1.5

Justification

All text and headings should be left justified. This means that headings should not be centred and the right edge of the body text should be jagged.

Pagination

Use the header or footer for page numbers (top right or bottom right). Do not show a page number on the title page.

Headers

You may add a shortened version of your title to the header, but do <u>not</u> add your name. (The reason for this is simply that papers must be anonymous when we submit them for national quality assessment.)

Paragraph spacing

No extra spacing between paragraphs. The first line of each new paragraph should be indented (0.5-1.0 cm) <u>except</u> in the following cases: the first line of a section or subsection; after a table, figure, or block quotation.

Sections

All sections and subsections should be numbered as they are in this document (see Table of contents and in-text numbering). Use a maximum of three levels (e.g. 3.1.1). If you need a fourth level, use bold face for the heading and no number (as in the heading 'Sections' four lines above). All section headings should be in bold face and 12 points except for main section headings, which can be raised to 14 points.

Examples

Examples should be separated from the running text, oriented to the left margin, and numbered consecutively throughout. In the running text, never refer to 'the following example' or 'the example above', but 'example (64)'.

(62)   I *may* go home now.

(63)   I *must* go home now.

(64)   I *should* go home now.

(65)   I *will* go home now.

Indented examples, like Examples (62) to (65) above, do not need italics. However, italics can be used for emphasis, as shown with the words *may, must*, *should*, and *will*.

Quotations and quotation marks

Ensure that quotations correspond exactly with the original, even if the original contains typos or is otherwise faulty. Use single quotation marks for quotations. If you omit a single word, indicate this by using three periods. For longer omissions, use three periods within square

brackets: [...]. If you insert comments or explanations of your own, you may do so within square brackets, e.g. [sic] or if you want to highlight something in a quotation you may do it like this: 'Cohesion is a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is *crucial to the interpretation* of it'. (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:8, emphasis added). If there are quotations within your quotations use double quotation marks for these.

Long quotations (50 words or more) or very important quotations should be separated from the text, introduced by a colon, not enclosed by quotation marks and not underlined, but indented on the page (use 10 points):

Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

(Chomsky, 1957)

Use single quotation marks for: (i) unfamiliar terms, e.g. *The American tradition of 'levels analysis' is characterised by the subdivision of speech into sequences of pitch levels plus a terminal contour*, (ii) to indicate that a word or a phrase is employed in an unusual way, e.g. *'new' information is to be taken in the sense of newsworthy information.* Single quotation marks are also used (iii) to indicate the meaning of a word or a phrase, while words or phrases used as linguistic examples are italicised, e.g. *a fast car* may be understood as meaning something like 'fast for a car' or 'faster than an ordinary car'.

Statistics, tables, and figures

Plan your tables so that they fit into the page without crowding. Do not cram your tables with too much information:

**Table 1.** Frequency of *may go*, *must go*, *should go* and *will go* in the BNC.

	Spoken BNC		Written BNC	
	#	#/1 million words	#	#/1 million words
may go	31	3.1	261	3.0
must go	80	8.0	891	10.3
should go	206	20.6	840	9.7
will go	352	35.2	1792	20.8
Total	669	66.9	3784	43.8

Column headings should be short, so as to stand out clearly above the columns. Each table should have a legend **above** it, containing the table number and a concise title. If necessary, this can be followed by a brief explanation or comment. Non-quantitative information can also be presented in a table:

Table 2. Tone preference in declaratives

Tone	Reinforcing modifiers		Attenuating modifiers		
	Maximizers	Boosters	Moderators	Diminishers	Approximators
Fall	x	x			
Fall-rise			x	x	x

Information can also be presented in figures, both statistical information and non-statistical information. The figure should also be accompanied by a short legend which is placed **below** the figure:
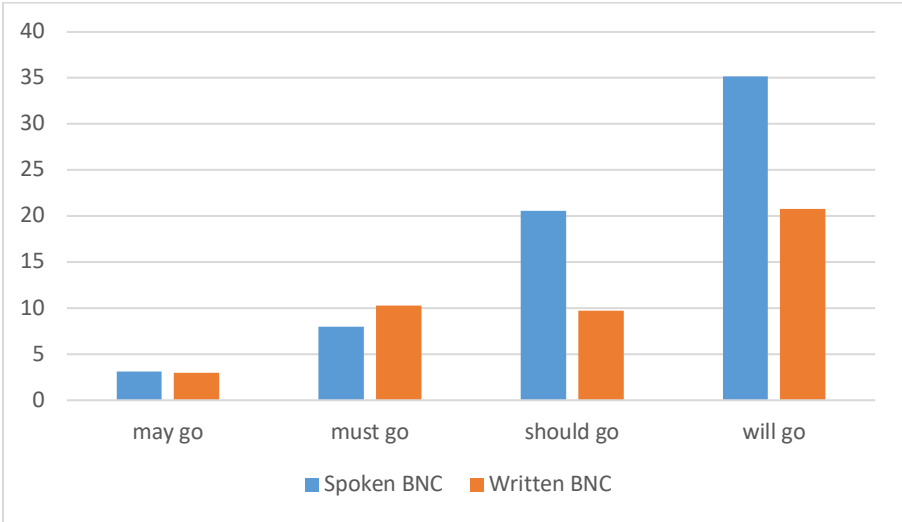
Figure 1. Number of *may go*, *must go*, *should go*, and *will go* per 1 million words in the BNC.

4 Defending your thesis

The opposition/defence seminar is an integral part of the whole project. In principle, your thesis work is not completed before you have opposed another student's paper and defended your own. After the opposition seminar, you will have a few days to make any required changes regarding language, format or minor aspects in the content. <u>It is this final submission which will be graded</u>. The time allowed for each paper is 30 minutes, which should be distributed as follows:

Authors own comments (2 minutes)

Here the author has a chance to very briefly comment on any remaining mistakes or infelicities, or whatever preparatory comments they may want to make.

Introduction (5 minutes)

The opponent should give a concise presentation of the paper, that is, *without making any evaluative comments* describe the author's aim(s), method, material, results, and conclusion. After the opponent has introduced the paper, the author of the paper should state whether the introduction is accurate and, if required, add their own comments by way of complementing the introduction.

Actual opposition (15 minutes)

The most important thing to remember here is that your stance as opponent is not to grade the paper as if you were an examiner, but to initiate a discussion about it with a starting point in your own reaction as reader. Focus on issues that need further clarification or explanation, and give the author as much support as possible with an aim to improving the quality of their paper. The following points are intended as guidelines for the opponent in identifying pertinent issues.

a. Content
   i. The aim of the paper: Is it clear? Is it relevant? Is it arguable? Is it fully developed within the available space of the paper?
   ii. Is the chosen methodology clearly described and argued for?

iii. Is the secondary material relevant to the aim and research question/s? Is it presented in a coherent way (as opposed to being a series of summarized texts)?

iv. Is the theoretical background clear and relevant?

v. Are the results clearly presented? Do they make sense in relation to the research question/s?

vi. How well does the discussion relate to the findings of the project?

b. Structure and presentation

i. Are the arguments properly introduced? Do the arguments follow each other in a logical way?

ii. Are quotations correctly copied and referenced?

iii. Is there a clear distinction between the voice of the author of the paper and that of each author cited in the paper?

c. Formal aspects

i. Is the language appropriate? Is the style consistent? Are the transitions used between paragraphs signposted?

ii. Is the paper correctly formatted? Does the reference section follow the same standard as the in-text citations?

d. Other points?

Open discussion

For the time remaining, the examiner and other participants in the seminar may pose questions and offer further advice to the author.

5 Assessment

You will be assessed in relation to the criteria set out in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. Pass grades are A-E.

Excerpt from the current Swedish Higher Education Ordinance: Learning outcomes for the degree of BA:

Degree of Bachelor [Kandidatexamen]

Scope
A Degree of Bachelor is awarded after the student has completed the courses required to gain 180 credits in a defined specialisation determined by each higher education institution itself, of which 90 credits are for progressively specialised study in the principal field (main field of study) of the programme.

Outcomes
Knowledge and understanding
For a Degree of Bachelor the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field, knowledge of applicable methodologies in the field, specialised study in some aspect of the field as well as awareness of current research issues.

Competence and skills
For a Degree of Bachelor the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to search for, gather, evaluate and critically interpret the relevant information for a formulated problem and also discuss phenomena, issues and situations critically

- demonstrate the ability to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously and to complete tasks within predetermined time frames

- demonstrate the ability to present and discuss information, problems and solutions in speech and writing and in dialogue with different audiences, and

- demonstrate the skills required to work autonomously in the main field of study.

Judgement and approach
For a Degree of Bachelor the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues

- demonstrate insight into the role of knowledge in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and

- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and ongoing learning.

Independent project (degree project)
A requirement for the award of a Degree of Bachelor is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) for at least 15 credits in the main field of study.

Appendix I: Some examples of reference entries in APA style

The reference list must include all (and only) the references cited in the text. That is, do not include any references that have not been cited in the text. References should be listed (i) alphabetically and (ii) chronologically, in the case of more than one publication by the same author(s). Use the same font and size (Times New Roman, size 12, line spacing 1.5) as for the rest of the text, but with hanging indent. Some examples of different references are provided below. Note that the headings are included here only to illustrate the type of source, and should not be included in your actual reference list.

Journal article

Barlow, M. (2013). Individual differences and usage-based grammar. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 18(4), 443-478.

Fillmore, C. J., Kay, P., & O'connor, M. C. (1988). Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of let alone. *Language*, 64, 501-538.

Book with single author

Biber, D. (2006). *University Language: A Corpus-based Study of Spoken and Written Registers*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Tomasello, M. (2009). *Constructing a language*. Harvard university press.

Book with multiple authors

Croft, W., & Cruse, D. A. (2004). *Cognitive linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Leech, G., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Chapter in edited book

Halliday, M. A. K. (1991). Corpus studies and probabilistic grammar. In K. Aijmer & B. Altenberg (Eds.), *English Corpus Linguistics* (pp. 8-29). London: Longman.

Hopper, P. J. (1998). Emergent grammar. In M. Tomasello (Ed.), *The new psychology of language* (pp. 155-176). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Reference work

Carter, R. & M. McCarthy. (2006). *Cambridge Grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Unpublished PhD thesis

Miller, D. (2012). *The Challenge of Constructing a Reliable Word List: An Exploratory Corpus-based Analysis of Introductory Psychology textbooks* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

Newspaper article

Seelye, K. Q. (2012, December 3). Spate of harsh weather in New England shifts sentiment on trees. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com (last accessed March 2013).

Computer software

Anthony, L. (2014). *AntConc* (Version 3.4.4) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University.

Scott, M. (2016). *WordSmith Tools* (Version 6) [Computer software]. Stroud: Lexical Analysis Software.

Unpublished conference paper

Römer, U., & O'Donnell, M. B. (2010, May). *Positional variation of n-grams and phrase-frames in a new corpus of proficient student writing*. Paper presented at the ICAME 31 Conference, Giessen, Germany.

Traugott, E.C. (1995, August). *The role of the development of discourse markers in a theory of grammaticalization*. Paper presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Manchester, UK.

Published conference paper

Erjavec, T. (2013). Slovene corpora for corpus linguistics and language technologies. In K. Gajdišová & A. Žáková (Eds.), *Natural Language Processing, Corpus Linguistics, e-Learning: Proceedings* (pp. 51–61). Lüdensheid: RAM-Verlag.

Appendix II: Useful resources

Graff, G. & C. Birkenstein. 2014. *They say, I say. The moves that matter in academic writing*. New York: Norton.

Wray, Alison & Aileen Bloomer. (2006). *Projects in linguistics: a practical guide to researching language*. London: Hodder Arnold.

(There are several versions of this book, dating back to 1998, and with various authors. Any edition is recommended.)

The Writing Centre at Malmö University: https://student.mau.se/en/student-services/the-writing-centre-and-support/