

Style Guide for work in Language and Linguistics

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1. Introduction

The most significant aspect of your work is always the quality of your research, understanding, and thinking, but clear organization and presentation are also important. In order to do justice to the quality of your work, to avoid plagiarism, and to have the satisfaction of submitting assignments that look professional, you need to present your work in an appropriate way.

This guide is for the use of all students studying **English Language and Linguistics modules** in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics (SELLL), and it sets out the conventions that you should follow in presenting your written work (unless otherwise indicated by instructions that relate to specific assignments).

In SELLL, two styles are prescribed: one for work in language and linguistics, and one for work in literature. The language and linguistics conventions are summarized below. Students working across both disciplines (e.g. Q300 students) need to familiarize themselves with both sets of conventions. **Use of literature conventions for language and linguistics assignments (or vice versa) is not allowed.**

2. Identifying and Acknowledging Source Materials

2.1 Identifying reliable source materials

Literature searches will unearth a plethora of resources on any given topic. An important step in identifying suitable materials is assessing the authority and appropriateness of source materials according to the following criteria:

- (a) **SCOPE:** Is the scope of the source too broad or too narrow? Is the source relevant to the variety or period (etc.) that you're researching?
- (b) **AUTHOR:** What are the author's credentials? Are they an established figure in the field or a self-proclaimed expert?
- (c) **AUDIENCE:** Who is the intended audience? Is the material too technical or too basic?
- (d) **CURRENCY:** Has the source recently been updated? Is the source out-dated?

For more information on how to assess the reliability of (on-line) resources, see for example the University's [Academic Skills Kit](#) (ASK) guides on [Finding Information](#) and [Evaluating Information](#).

Scholarly articles published in academic journals are written by and for experts, so their content can generally be deemed reliable. **Caution must be exercised with internet resources, especially if the author or publication date is not given.** Note that, because of its introductory/background nature, you should not be citing Wikipedia directly or indirectly as a source in university-level work. However, it can help you understand underlying concepts so that you can engage with (and cite) more appropriately advanced work. Quoting from, or paraphrasing, course materials is strongly discouraged on all modules and forbidden on most. As a rule, you should always try and find the original source of the lecture materials. Check lecture handouts for references or ask your lecturer for guidance. (If you have been given permission to use course materials, you must acknowledge them.)

2.2 Acknowledging source materials

All sources must be fully and accurately acknowledged in your work. Proper acknowledgement of sources is essential in order to **avoid plagiarism**, preserve academic integrity, and to situate your work in an ongoing scholarly debate. **The University's guidance on Good Academic Practice, which includes information on the University's definition of plagiarism, is available on the ASK site, [here](#).**

If you quote directly (*verbatim*) from a source, you must do all of the following: (a) indicate the text is a quotation by enclosing the quoted words in single quotation marks, or (for long quotations of around 40+ words) indenting them; (b) give a reference to the source at the point where you quote it (an in-text reference); and (c) include the source in your List of References at the end of your essay. Direct quotations should be used sparingly (e.g. in instances where the exact wording used in the source is important). In other cases, it is preferable to paraphrase rather than directly quote source materials, because paraphrasing in your own words helps to show that you genuinely understand the material.

If you paraphrase an idea from a source, there are no quotation marks but you must still: (a) provide an in-text reference to the source at the point where you mention the relevant idea(s); and (b) include the source in your List of References. This is necessary where the idea is not your own and where it can be regarded as someone else's intellectual property. It is not necessary in the case of ideas that are very widely accepted or well-known matters of fact: e.g. you don't have to indicate a source if you mention that Shakespeare died in 1616, that Saussure was a Swiss linguist, or that /b/ is a voiced bilabial plosive.

Work in SELLL Language & Linguistics modules should follow the Harvard style of referencing.

For guidance on how to use this style of referencing, see the '[Cite Them Right Harvard](#)' section of the Library's Referencing Styles page, which includes a [Cite Them Right Harvard Style Sheet](#). There is also a link for accessing the [Cite Them Right website](#) through the Library.

3. Presenting Linguistic Coursework and Data

3.1 Overall formatting

An essay should have an explicit **title**. It should, if appropriate, have explicit sections, the first of which should be a brief Introduction and the last an explicit Conclusion. It is a good idea to title your sections and number them (e.g. '1. Introduction', '5. Conclusion'). Sub-sections should be numbered and formatted, for example:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Data and methodology
 - 3.1 Data
 - 3.2 Methodology

To mark the beginning of a new paragraph, either (a) indent the first line [*like the beginning of the present paragraph*] or (b) leave a line space [*as with the division between other paragraphs in this document*]. Be consistent throughout your essay in the method that you use.

In keeping with the requirement for the full and accurate acknowledgement of sources, essays must have a **List of References** which follows the main body of the text (i.e. comes after the Conclusion) and precedes any Appendices. Note that the List of References should include only those sources that are referred to in the essay; it is not a bibliography that lists every single source that you may have read as part of your research on the topic.

3.2 Presenting examples

In some modules, you will need to back up your argumentation with reference to specific examples of language use, as shown in the example below. Examples of this kind must be consecutively numbered throughout an essay. Also, make sure that an example is not spread across pages. For information on how to keep lines/paragraphs together on the same page in Microsoft Word, see: [Keep text together](#).

Example (introducing the first example in an essay):

In negative raising, the negative particle adjacent to the predicate in the complement clause is transferred, or raised, to the predicate in the matrix clause, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) a. I think that he will *not* come.
b. I do *not* think that he will come.
(Horn, 2001, p.315)

3.3 Use and mention of linguistic expressions

In a language/linguistics essay, it is particularly important to make a distinction between the expressions you are USING in writing your essay and the words or expressions you are writing *about* (i.e. those you are CITING / MENTIONING). When you are citing an expression, the expression must be typographically distinctive. The usual way to do this is by putting it in *italics*. Thus, when mentioning the prepositional phrase (PP) *round the bend*, italicize it as exemplified here. In making this kind of typographical distinction, it will be clear whether you are referring, for example, to *Bath* (a four-letter word) or to Bath (a city in the southwest of England).

If an example is particularly important, or is a full sentence, a linguistic principle, or something that you are going to refer to again or compare with other examples, you should give it a bracketed number, add an empty line above and below, and inset it, as indicated above in 3.2. For example, an alternative way of citing the sentence *These fritters need to be thrown away* would be as follows (where it would be the second numbered example in an essay):

(2) These fritters need to be thrown away.

In this case, the text does not need to be italicized. Thereafter, this example sentence would only need to be referred to as '(2)' (e.g. As illustrated in (2), ...).

3.4 Glossing words or sentences from other languages

When you discuss words or sentences from another language, you will need to make their meaning clear to the reader. If it is just a single word or short phrase, you can make it part of your ordinary text. Italicize the word/phrase and, immediately following it, supply an English translation (not in italics, but in quotation marks). An example would be noting that, in addition to the verb *essen* 'to eat', German also has a verb *fressen* 'to devour/to eat like an animal'.

If you want to give an entire sentence, this should be done as a numbered example (see section 3.2), like the following for a Bengali sentence:

(3) ami amTa kheyechi
 I the.mango have.eaten
 'I have eaten the mango'.

The first line gives the Bengali sentence, the second line gives the so-called gloss (i.e. a translation for each separate Bengali word), and the third line gives a translation of the entire sentence. No italics are used, but the third line is in quotation marks. Also note that each source word must be left-aligned with the corresponding gloss.

This method should also be used if the sentence is not from another language but from an earlier stage of English, and would not be immediately comprehensible to a non-specialist. An example with an Old English sentence is given in (4):

(4) pa cwæp se Hælend him to, Aris hal of ðam bedde
 then said the Saviour him to arise whole from the bed
 'Then the Saviour said to him, "Arise whole from the bed"'
 (ÆHom 2 38)

The information in the fourth line of (4) identifies the source (text and page/line) of the Old English sentence. In this case, it is from an electronic corpus, and the system of referencing of that corpus is used. It may seem somewhat impenetrable, but it follows the form given in the source itself. In cases where the source is a printed edition, a reference might consist of the name of the editor, the year the edition was published, and the page where the sentence is found, as shown in (5):

- (5) þa cwæp se Hælend him to, Aris hal of ðam bedde
 then said the Saviour him to arise whole from the bed
 ‘Then the Saviour said to him, “Arise whole from the bed”’
 (Godden, 1979, p.321)

Remember that the various lines of an example presented in this way should be kept together, so that they all appear on the same page (see section 3.2 above). If you need to know about more complicated cases, check and follow the [Leipzig Glossing Rules](#).

3.5 Presenting and referring to tables and figures

In some fields of linguistics (e.g. sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics), results are often presented in tables and figures (where figures are any kind of diagram or chart). If you include these in your work, they should be numbered consecutively throughout the essay and there should be a caption under the table/figure that describes what it shows. This enables you to refer the reader to any tables/figures in the body of your essay (e.g. ‘As shown in Figure 1 below, ...’; ‘Table 1 summarizes the results of the survey’, etc.). If you reproduce a table/figure from an existing study, then just as with any other material taken from a source, you need to mention that source, as shown in the example below.

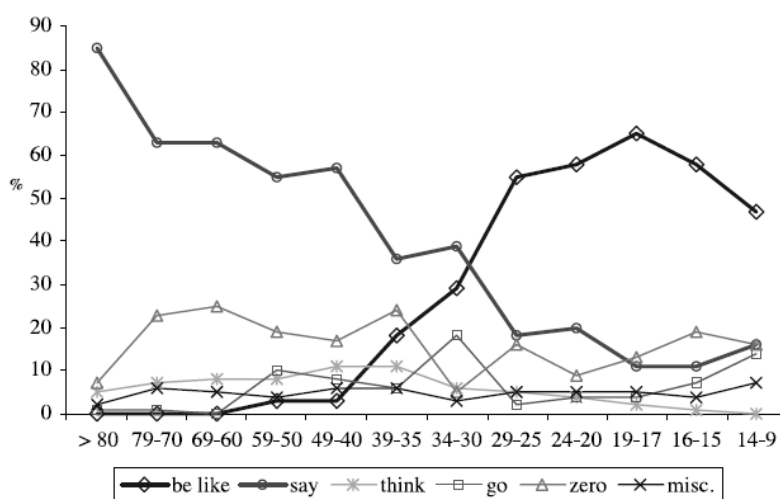


Figure 1. Overall distribution of quotatives across age in Toronto (2002–2003) (source: Tagliamonte, 2009, p.85)

3.6 IPA fonts

For essays that require IPA symbols (or any ‘non-standard’ symbols), make sure that the symbol you are using shows correctly in your document before you submit. For IPA symbols, the easiest approach is to use a Unicode font that includes the relevant symbols and, once you confirm that they appear on your screen as desired, to save your finished document as a PDF file. For further information, see the [International Phonetic Association website](#). The IPA keyboard is handy for copying and pasting IPA symbols into your documents: <http://ipa.typeit.org>. Failure to check that your final assignment contains the correct symbols may result in errors and a lower mark than you otherwise would have achieved.

3.7 Syntactic trees

There are various applications and websites that can be used for constructing syntactic tree diagrams that you can then paste into your documents. These include: Donald Derrick’s [TreeForm](#), Yoichiro Hasebe’s [RSyntaxTree](#), and Miles Shang’s [Syntax Tree Generator](#). As with assignments that require IPA symbols, you should confirm that your syntactic trees appear as intended on screen and then save your finished document as a PDF file for submission. Again, failure to check that any diagrams in your final assignment appear as intended may result in a lower mark than you otherwise would have achieved.

3.8 Academic writing, grammar, and punctuation

If you need practice in these areas, you can visit the relevant sections of the Academic Skills Kit’s [‘Writing’ pages](#).