

***TRANSILVANIA* UNIVERSITY of BRAȘOV**

Faculty of Letters

**B.A. PROJECT and M.A. DISSERTATION
WRITING GUIDELINES**

Information Booklet

BA Project and M.A. Dissertation WRITING

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are relevant to IIIrd year undergraduate students and IInd year Master students who wish to write their BA Project/Dissertation in English. They were issued in order to assist such students in the preparation, production, and revision stages of BA Project/Dissertation writing, preceding the oral presentation of the finished product.

The BA Project and the MA Dissertation are an academic exercise aimed at demonstrating that, independently, students can organise and produce a substantial piece of individual work. Therefore, the students embarking upon the production of such papers, will mainly be responsible for

- deciding upon a topic
- discussing it with the supervisor
- writing the paper
- editing, typing, and proofreading it
- submitting it at the right time

Some of the aspects outlined above are worth looking at in more detail.

1. The Nature, Topic, and Scope of the BA Project/M.A. Dissertation

Quantitatively, a BA Project/MA Dissertation is a piece or written work of variable length, starting from a minimum of 17000 words structured in at least three chapters to a maximum of 20000 words (with the exception of appendices). It can be theoretical in nature, it can take the form of empirical research, or it can be a combination of theory and practice in various areas generally subsumed under the broader fields commonly known as language (or linguistics/applied linguistics), literature or cultural studies.

The following are examples of areas and approaches which may be the primary concern of your paper:

- comparative-contrastive approaches to one or more language systems;
- semantic/pragmatic approaches to linguistic data from one or more languages;
- translation studies;
- language acquisition/assessment;
- literary criticism;
- text analysis,
- lexicography,
- culture-related issues, etc.

2. Supervision

Finding a supervisor and seeking his/her advice on the suitability of the topic you would like to deal with is your responsibility. Once the topic has been negotiated, you and your supervisor should work out a schedule of progress meetings (individual consultations) to take place on a regular (e.g. weekly/bimonthly/ monthly) basis.

Remember that it is you who must take initiative in arranging these meetings.

Overall, the supervisor can be expected to

- (i) help you produce an outline, so as to clarify the aim, objectives, and scope of your Project/Dissertation and ensure that the content is valid, relevant and systematically dealt with;
- (ii) help you decide on an appropriate title for your Project /Dissertation;
- (iii) advise you on what to read and what other sources of information to use;
- (iv) discuss and sort out major problems that may arise in the research/writing process;
- (v) read carefully and comment on the draft material you produce, and indicate to you any noticeable shortcomings in the way you are dealing with the task at hand. You will be expected to take notice of the supervisor's comments/recommendations and rewrite your draft accordingly.

Any further help will be at the discretion of the supervisor.

Remember that

- your supervisor is not the proofreader of your work: this means that the drafts you submit should be neat, reader-friendly, and as error- and typo-free as possible;
- your supervisor cannot be expected to read and make comments on very short pieces of writing, i.e. less than a section or chapter;
- your supervisor cannot be expected to read the same chapter or section over and over again, each time you make changes: to save time and effort, make sure that you do not submit the same material more than twice.

3. Ethical considerations

- The BA Project/MA Dissertation submitted for the final assessment must be the student's own work. Unacknowledged direct copying from the work of another person, or the close paraphrasing of somebody else's work is called plagiarism and is a serious offence, equated with cheating in examinations. This applies to copying both from other students' work and from published sources as books, reports or journal articles, whether on paper or on the

internet.

- Use of citations, of quotes or data from the work of others is entirely acceptable, and is often very valuable, provided that the source of the quotation or data is given (see also section 5 below). It is not acceptable, however, to put together unacknowledged passages from the same or from different sources, linking these together with a few words or sentences of your own and changing a few words from the original text: this is regarded as over-dependence on other sources, which is a form of plagiarism.
- You are hereby warned that plagiarism under any form automatically leads to a failing grade for your work.

4. Presentation Standards: Technicalities

- All the information about the technical aspects of writing your BA Project/MA Dissertation starts from the assumption that you are able to use a computer. In order to standardize the format of BA Projects/MA Dissertations produced by different students, what follows is a set of parameters that you should be aware of when word processing your work.
- **4.1 Font and font size**
- The standard specifications are Times New Roman (available in the font folder of your computer), 12 points in size for the main text, and 13 and/or 14 points for the titles and subtitles.
- **4.2 Justification**
- Full justification, blocked paragraphs (not indented) and a blank line between paragraphs are recommended. Alternatively, you may use the traditional format, with indented paragraphs and no additional separation line between them. In either case, the chapter titles will be centred, and the section/subsection titles will be left-justified.

4.3 Styles:

You may use bolds for:

- . the front page of your project
- . the contents page of your project
- . chapter, section, and subsection titles
- . names of authors in the reference list
- . ***Bold italic may be used in the text for special emphasis.***
- . *Use italics for:* □
- . unassimilated borrowings, and for Latin, French, German formulae (e.g. status quo, ad hoc. comme il faut, Zeitgeist);

- (optionally for) abbreviations typically used in academic discourse: i.e., e.g., cf., etc., q.v.;
- isolated Romanian/non-English words in otherwise English sentences;
- titles of books in the reference list (see section 5 below)
- for emphasis, i.e. when you are especially attracting your reader's attention to one or several words; for the same purpose, you may alternatively use bolds or underlines.
- if the highlighted words belong to a quotation and they are not in italics/bolds/underlines in the original text, do not forget to mention: (my emphasis) or (emphasis added).

Consider the example below:

This suggests that there no longer is one English language, not even inside the Inner Circle, all the more so in communities where English is used as a second or foreign language. As Graddol (2000:3) states, '... the increasing adoption of English as a second language, where it takes on *local forms*, is leading to *fragmentation and diversity*. No longer is it the case, if it ever was, that English unifies all who speak it' (emphasis added).

- **4.4 Margins** Left: 3 cm; Right, Top, and Bottom: 2,5 cm.
- **4.5 Line spacing:** Use 1.5 line spacing for the main text, and wider (e.g. 2 or 2.5) to separate the main text from the titles/subtitles.
- **4.6 Page numbers:** Number each page of your work. *The position of the page numbers must be at the bottom of the page and their alignment at the centre of the page.*

4.7 Notes

You may use either footnotes, or end of chapter notes with numbers in the text and a numbered list at the end of each chapter.

4.8 Quotations

Quotations will be signalled by single quotes: if the passage thus quoted already includes a quotation (a word/phrase/sentence), the quote within the quote will be marked by double quotes.

Optionally, quotations (which may be inserted in their original, untranslated version), when longer, may be indented on both sides; additionally, they may be italicized. Consider the example below:

As Connor (1996:15) points out, at that stage contrastive rhetoric was very much error-based: 'error' was taken to be everything which departed from the English-style rhetorical organisation. In Kaplan's own words,

‘At the time, it seemed perfectly reasonable to look at the texts that students produced, and to try to determine where their production deviated from that of the native speakers (writers). In order to do that, it was necessary to have a baseline set of data descriptive of the production of texts by native speakers. And an obvious place to look for such baseline data seemed to lie in the work being done in English as a mother tongue education’ (1988: 276).

4.9 Other bits and pieces

- . Headed sections will be numbered, e.g. 4. Analysis. One or two decimal numbers for sub-section numbers may be used if desired (e.g. 4.1 or 4.1.2).
- . For short items listed after bullets or numbers use the bullets/numbers icon and no punctuation at line ends. Use either capitals or low case after bullets.
- . Appendices (if any) must be placed at the end of the project/dissertation, either before or after the list of references, with Appendix One and (after a blank line) the appendix heading, if applicable.
- . Chapter numbers must be written as letters, e.g. Chapter One; section numbers must be figures, e.g. 1.1.
- . Use capitals for No. 2, Question 5 or Q 5, Item 8, Appendix Two, (but 'in appendix'/ 'see appendix' when you tell your reader where to find the information), and lower case for page 4 or p. 4, section 6.
 - . For numbers in text (but not page or question references, measures or tabulated numbers), write numbers up to ten as words (e.g. 'ten') and numbers from 11 on in figures (e.g. '11 ').

5. Referencing

- . Two aspects of referencing are relevant here:

5.1 References within the body of the text

- . There are several ways an authority can be cited in a paper. One way is to use a direct quotation, like in the two examples provided above. Another way is to paraphrase of the author's words:
 - . Example 1:
 - . The same theory was later given more weight by Lado (1957), a former student of Fries, who maintained that... etc.
 - . Example 2:
 - . Valdman (1993:15) claims that it is highly difficult to do research that answers relevant questions in the area of second-language learning for reasons which... etc.
 - . where (1993:15) reads as (year of publication: page) where the quotation can be found).
 - . A similar system of referencing is used when there is a specific mention of the book referred to:
 - . Example 3:

- . In his work *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), Lado extends the framework in such a way as to accommodate elements of cross-cultural analysis... etc.
 - . In a series of references, the sequencing criterion may be either (a) alphabetical or (b) chronological:
 - . (a) Faerch and Kasper (1981), Godfrey (1980), Schachter (1974) and Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) have all pointed to 'avoidance strategies' as another form of covert grammatical error.
- (b) Schachter (1974), Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977), Godfrey (1980) and Faerch and Kasper (1981) have all pointed to 'avoidance strategies' as another form of covert grammatical error.

If you take a quotation from a source other than the original, (secondary quotation) show where you got it from. For example,

According to Liebman (in Connor, 1996:31), traditionalists focused exclusively on paragraph organisation at the expense of the other components of the traditional rhetorical model which... etc.

5.2 Reference list

The reference list should be presented at the very end of the project/dissertation, before the Appendices. It should include **all (and only)** those works referred to in the text, listed in alphabetical order of authors' surname. The following are examples of entries.

Reference to a book :

Connor, U. (1996) *Contrastive Rhetoric. Cross-cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing*. Cambridge: CUP

Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman

Reference to an article in a collection of articles (i.e., an edited book):

Hinds, J. (1987) 'Reader versus writer responsibility: a new typology' in Connor, U. & Kaplan, R.B. (eds). *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text*. Reading MA: Addison Wesley, pp.141-52.

Lightbown, P. (1983) 'Exploring relationships between developmental and instructional sequences in L2 acquisition' in Seliger, H.& Long, M. (eds) *Classroom-oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition*. Rowley Mass: Newbury House.

Reference to an article in a journal

Jenkins, S. & Hinds. I. (1987) 'Business letter writing: English, French, and Japanese' in the *TESOL Quarterly* 21, no.2, pp.327-54

Schumann. J. (1993) 'Some problems with falsification: an illustration from SLA Research' in *Applied Linguistics*, 14, pp. 295-306.

Reference to information found on the internet (no identifiable author):

At the very end of the reference list, like this:

* * ‘Will English remain a lingua franca?’ at www.engpub.com

6. The cover and the front page of the BA Project/MA Dissertation

The cover page of your work will have the following layout: **see end of this guide**

7. Outline of the BA Project/MA Dissertation contents and structure

Overall, your project should have:

- an **Abstract** (see guidelines and example below)
- an **Introduction**, including a statement of the topic, a rationale, and a brief presentation of the scope, main issues/working assumptions, a description of the method(s) used in approaching the topic, as well as an overview of the organisation/structure of the subsequent chapters;
- the **main text** organised into chapters and subchapters (ending in short conclusions/summaries);
- a **Conclusions** chapter summing up the conclusions and findings of the main text.

Abstract: guidelines

Begin a new page, centre the word **Abstract**.

Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. Your abstract should contain at least:

- your research topic,
- a hint at your research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions.
- you may also include possible implications of your research and future work you see connected with your findings.
- your abstract may be a single paragraph or several (but no more than three paragraphs)
- your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.
- language that highlights your own work, e.g.: this paper, the/my research, etc.

(adapted from: owl.english.purdue.edu)

Here is an example of an abstract for a paper published in a journal. Emphasis was added to show you how language is used by the author to direct the reader towards his/her work:

Foregrounding in poetic discourse: between deviation and cognitive constraints

Yeshayahu Shen, Tel Aviv University, Israel

Abstract

Foregrounding theory generally assumes that poetic language deviates from norms characterizing the ordinary use of language (e.g. at the phonological, grammatical, semantic or pragmatic levels) and that this deviation interferes with cognitive principles and processes that make communication possible. However, a neglected issue in foregrounding theory is whether any constraints exist, and if so, what characterizes them. **The present article proposes** that foregrounding theory should be complemented by a cognitive theory that specifies constraints on such deviations, on the basis of theoretical and empirical considerations. Due to the privileged status of figurative language among the foregrounding devices, **this general argument is illustrated by** a close analysis of two figurative types, similes and oxymora. **The analysis examines** their distribution in poetic discourse and investigates the psychological processes involved in the way people comprehend them. **It is proposed that** for each of these figures there is a set of existing structures that could equally instantiate them as a foregrounding device. However, poetic discourse, both cross-linguistically and cross-culturally, robustly favours the use of the cognitively simpler option. **The implications of these empirical findings are discussed** in the light of foregrounding theory.

(source: <http://lal.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/16/2/169> Published by: <http://www.sagepublications.com>)

8. Working method: suggested steps

- deciding on the scope/area of your project
- reading bibliography and notemaking
- drafting a plan/revising the initial plan
- defining the purpose of the project and identifying the research methods to be adopted
- writing, revising and rewriting the text
- proofreading and final editing

9. Assessment criteria for BA Projects/MA Dissertations

Your work will be judged on the extent to which it shows:

- A sensible, clearly-stated and honestly-pursued purpose.

- A judicious use of bibliographic references, which must extend beyond the basic reading for the course, and be up-to-date.
- Sufficient novelty and enough independence of thought to show that the work is clearly creative rather than merely imitative.
- An appropriate balance of theoretical background and practical application. (60%/40% BA; 40%/60% MA)
- An accurate and appropriate use of English and of a terminology which is relevant to your field, as well as consistency in the use of the above mentioned academic conventions of style and layout.



Unless your supervisor advises differently, please make sure that you observe all the specifications and conventions presented above.

The Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Good luck with your work!

UNIVERSITATEA *TRANSILVANIA* DIN BRAȘOV
FACULTATEA DE LITERE

Program de studii: Limba și literatura

**engleză/română/chineză– Limba și literatura
engleză/franceză/germană/română**

Limbi moderne aplicate – germană/franceză – engleză

Studii americane

Studii lingvistice pentru comunicare interculturală (size:
18 points)

LUCRARE DE LICENȚĂ/DIZERTAȚIE

(size: 20 points)

Absolvent

Ioana Ionescu

(size: 18 points)

Coordonator

Lector universitar Paula Popescu

(size: 18 points)

Brașov

2016 (size: 18 points)

TRANSILVANIA UNIVERSITY OF BRAȘOV

FACULTY OF LETTERS

**Study programme: English/Romanian/Chinese
language and literature –**

**English/French/German/Romanian language and
literature**

**Applied Modern Languages – German/French –
English**

American Studies

Linguistic studies for intercultural communication (size: 18
points)

BA/MA PROJECT

(size: 20 points)

TITLE OF THE PAPER

(size: 18 points)

Candidate

Ioana Ionescu

(size: 18 points)

Supervisor

Dr. Paula Popescu (size: 18 points)

Brașov

2016 (size: 18 points)