



## How to Study Linguistics



## A Guide to Organising Classes and Assignments

**Technische Universität Braunschweig**

Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik  
Sprachwissenschaft

# **How to Study Linguistics**

**A Guide to Organising Classes and Assignments**

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## 1 Introduction

This document provides an overview of important organisational aspects for the linguistic track of your studies, arranged by modules. Part 1 of this manual gives an overview of the courses offered in the different modules. Part 2 provides a summary of important registration deadlines (for obtaining credits for your courses) and submission dates for coursework in English Linguistics. Part 3 lists the specific requirements for term papers (e.g. length, complexity) depending on the course level (A2, E2, M2) and type of paper (Hausarbeit, Komplexe Hausarbeit, BA or MA Thesis). For any term paper or thesis, you need to first submit a research proposal before you start writing the term paper (→ *How to Write a Research Proposal*). You also need to consult other relevant manuals (→ *How to Write a Term Paper*, *How to Avoid Plagiarism*).

## 2 Organising your schedules

### 2.1 Basismodul

In the *Basismodul*, you have to attend **all 4 courses** listed below. To complete the module you need to pass the final exam. The exam is divided into two parts: Part 1 (covering the courses in the winter term) will take place at the end of the winter term, and part 2 (covering the courses in the summer term) will take place at the end of the summer term.

Winter term	Summer term
<i>Introduction to English Linguistics (I)</i>	<i>Introduction to English Linguistics (II)</i>
<i>Descriptive Grammar of English</i>	<i>Spoken English</i>

### 2.2 Aufbaumodul

In the *Aufbaumodul*, you are required to attend **two courses** – one from each of the following areas:

- *Systems of Language and Communication*
- *Developmental and Linguistic Variation*

Winter term		Summer term	
<i>Morphology</i>	Systems	<i>Contrastive Grammar (German – English)</i>	Systems or Variation
<i>Syntax</i>	Systems	<i>Second Language Acquisition</i>	Variation
<i>Semantics and Pragmatics</i>	Systems		
<i>First Language Acquisition</i>	Variation		

**Note:** *Students who want to attend courses in module A2 must have completed module B2.*

Ideally, you attend a course from the area *Systems of Language and Communication* in the winter term and a course from the area *Developmental and Linguistic Variation* in the summer

term. To complete the module you have to give a presentation in one of the courses and write a term paper (either in the same course or in the other one).

### 2.3 Erweiterungsmodul

You can study the *Erweiterungsmodul* as *Fachmodul* or *BA-Modul*. The requirements for each of these paths are specified below the table with potential course topics in the E2 module.

Winter term	Summer term
<i>Psycholinguistics</i> (various topics)	2 – 4 courses on various topics, e.g. <i>Varieties of English</i> <i>Language Across the Lifespan</i> <i>Contrasting Theories in First Language Acquisition</i> <i>Language Disorders</i> <i>Discourse Analysis</i> <i>Advanced English Syntax</i> <i>Heritage Language Acquisition</i>
<i>Bilingualism</i> (various topics)	
<i>Second Language Acquisition</i> (advanced topics)	

**Note:** *Students who want to attend courses in module E2 must have completed module A2.*

#### (a) Studying E2 as *Fachmodul*

If you study E2 as *Fachmodul*, you have to attend **two courses listed for module E2** as well as **one extracurricular course**. Ideally, you attend one E2 course in the winter term and the second E2 course in the summer term. To complete the module you have to give a presentation (*Referat*) in one of the courses and write a term paper (either in the same course or in the other one).

For the extracurricular courses, make sure that the topic is somehow linked to language and linguistics. For example, you can attend the *Linguistisches Kolloquium*, which presents talks about various areas of linguistics by researchers from Braunschweig as well as from other universities. Each semester, there is a list of extracurricular courses in the course guide for the *BA English Studies*. It is also possible to attend linguistics courses in other departments (e.g., the linguistics section of the Department of German) or at other universities, to attend linguistic conferences, workshops, or language classes (e.g., at the *Sprachenzentrum*).

#### (b) Studying E2 as *BA-Modul*

If you study E2 as *BA-Modul*, you have to attend **two courses listed for module E2** as well as **one extracurricular course**. To complete the module you have to give a presentation (*Referat*) in one of the courses and write a BA thesis. For your BA thesis, you should ideally choose a topic linked to one of the classes in the winter term. Therefore, we advise you to attend two classes in the winter term.

Students writing their BA thesis in linguistics are strongly advised to attend the class *Linguistic Research Methods*, which is regularly offered in the summer term. This class deals with critical research skills for data collection and (statistical) data analysis, which you will need in your BA thesis. You can either take this class to earn credits in module P (see below) or attend it as your extracurricular course.

## 2.4 P-Modul

This module is compulsory for students with the profile *Gymnasiallehramt* or *Fachwissenschaft*. To complete this module you have to attend one project course and write a portfolio. Note that the courses offered in this module either have a focus on *Literary and Cultural Studies* or on *Linguistics*. Students writing their BA thesis in linguistics are strongly advised to attend the course *Linguistic Research Methods* as it deals with critical research skills for data collection and (statistical) data analysis, which you will need in your BA thesis. The course is offered each summer term.

## 3 Organising your *Prüfungsleistungen*

Please make sure you register in QIS (<https://vorlesungen.tu-bs.de/qisserver>) for *Prüfungsleistungen* during the time interval announced by the *Prüfungsamt* ([www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/elektronischepruefungsanmeldung](http://www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/elektronischepruefungsanmeldung)). Details for the individual modules can be found below.

### 3.1 Basismodul (B2)

Registration for the final exam takes place in the winter term for both parts; this means when you register for part 1, you are automatically registered for part 2 at the end of the summer term. Do NOT register for part 2 separately! Your credits for the final exam will be entered into QIS only after part 2 has been completed.

If you cannot take the exam for medical reasons, you need to submit a doctor's certificate (*Attest*) at the *Akademisches Prüfungsamt* within three working days after the exam. Please send or hand in a copy of the certificate to the secretary of the linguistics department (either as a photocopy or an electronic copy via e-mail).

### 3.2 Aufbaumodul (A2) / Erweiterungsmodul (E2)

For the modules A2 and E2, you register in QIS as soon as you start studying the module. This way, you are formally registered for the *Prüfungsleistung* (*Hausarbeit mit Präsentation*). Note that you cannot register for the two parts of the *Prüfungsleistung* separately. You will then register for individual presentation and term paper topics with your instructors. For presentations, you register with the course instructor at the end of Week 2 of each term by choosing a particular topic. For term papers, you register with your instructor in the last week of the term and/or by handing in a research proposal in the term break.

**Cancellation policy:** You cannot cancel your registration for a presentation once you have registered and chosen a topic. For a term paper, cancelling your registration is possible as long as you have not yet obtained a topic for it (i.e., have not yet handed in a research proposal) and up to one week before the final deadline. If these conditions are met, you must inform your instructor that you decided against writing a term paper in their course but remain formally registered on QIS for the module. Your QIS registration will remain open until you write a term paper in another course. If you are registered for a term paper and fail to submit it on time, you will receive a fail (5.0).

Term papers are strictly tied to courses. This means if you decide to write a term paper in one of the courses in the winter term, you will write your term paper during the break following the winter term; if you decide to write your paper in the summer term course, you will write your paper during the term break in the summer.

The deadlines for the submission of term papers depend on whether or not you need the credits at the beginning of the following term.

Credits for the module required by...	Submission date	
	Winter term	Summer term
...the <b>beginning</b> of the following term	15 <sup>th</sup> March	15 <sup>th</sup> September
... the <b>end</b> of the following term	31 <sup>st</sup> March	30 <sup>th</sup> September

**Note:** The earlier deadlines are relevant for students...

- who want to complete module A2 and move on to module E2 in the following term;
- who want to complete module E2 (*Komplexe Hausarbeit*) and want to move on to a Master's programme in the following term.

### 3.3 BA-Arbeit (Modul E2)

For the BA thesis, you register with your supervisor by handing in a special form ([www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/formulare](http://www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/formulare)) available at the *Prüfungsamt*. You usually write your BA thesis during the summer term ([www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/zeitplaene](http://www.tu-braunschweig.de/fk6/studierende/apa/zeitplaene)). The date of submission is individually determined for each student and depends on the date of the registration.

For presentations, you register with the course instructor at the end of week 2 of each term by choosing a particular topic.

### 3.4 P-Modul

Please register in QIS for the portfolio. For dates of submission, see modules A2 / E2.

## 4 Requirements for term papers

### 4.1 A2: Hausarbeit

The length of your term paper should be approximately 10 pages, which is approximately 3,000 words.

The topic of your paper should be based on one of the topics discussed in class, that means you choose a phenomenon or sub-topic that you are interested in and subsequently develop a research question / hypothesis. Typically, A2 term papers are theoretical or overview papers, that means your term paper is based on previous literature. As a general rule, you should use one original research paper relevant for your research question / hypothesis in addition to textbook chapters and literature that you have dealt with in class. You demonstrate that you can summarize and interpret the paper and/or analyse the data therein according to the approaches, models or theories presented in class.

We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- give a summary of the research paper, presenting the linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way;
- give examples (from the literature or your own) to support your explanations;
- provide a critical reflection and conclusion;
- submit your paper in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).

#### 4.2 E2: Komplexe Hausarbeit

The length of your term paper should be 15 – 20 pages, which is up to 6,000 words.

Based on the course topics, you will be given several general research questions, of which you choose one to develop a more specific research question / hypothesis for your research proposal. E2 term papers are typically theoretical term papers, that means your term paper is based on previous literature. In order to answer your research question or to test your hypothesis, you should use 3 – 5 relevant original research papers. You should use textbooks or handbooks only in a limited way, for example to introduce your topic and the general theoretical background. You demonstrate that you can assess and evaluate different papers or datasets in comparative perspective and that you come to a reasoned conclusion in the context of current research.

We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- present the linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way, and supported by examples;
- develop and use appropriate criteria for comparing and evaluating papers and data;
- provide a critical reflection and conclusion;
- submit your paper in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).

#### 4.3 BA-Arbeit / Bachelor Thesis

The length of a BA thesis is approximately 30 pages.

A BA thesis can either be theoretical or empirical. You are expected to find your own research question and hypothesis. In the BA thesis, you demonstrate that you can read and summarize linguistic research and that you can **apply** knowledge you acquired in seminars to analyzing a phenomenon or conducting a small-scale study.

When writing a theoretical BA thesis, you proceed in the same way as described for “Komplexe Hausarbeiten” above. In the case of an empirical BA thesis, you design or conduct your own research study (i.e., you collect new data), or you use data taken from linguistic corpora.

We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- present the linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way;
- find and apply appropriate methods of data collection, coding and analysis;
- provide a critical reflection and conclusion;
- submit your paper in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).

#### 4.4 M2: Hausarbeit

The length of your term paper should be approximately 12 pages.

Based on the course topics, you will be given several general research questions, of which you choose one and develop a more specific research question / hypothesis for your research proposal. Typically, M2 term papers are theoretical term papers, that means your term paper is based on previous literature. In order to answer your research question or to test your hypothesis, you should use 2 – 3 relevant original research papers. You should use textbooks or handbooks only in a limited way, for example to introduce your topic and the general theoretical background. You demonstrate that you can assess and evaluate different papers



or data sets in comparative perspective and come to a reasoned conclusion in the context of current research.

We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- present the linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way, and supported by examples;
- develop and use appropriate criteria for comparing and evaluating papers and data;
- provide a critical reflection and conclusion;
- submit your paper in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).

#### 4.5 MA Arbeit / Master Thesis

The length of an MA thesis is 50 – 60 pages.

An MA thesis can either be theoretical or empirical. You are expected to find your own research question. In the MA thesis, you demonstrate that you can read and summarize linguistic research and that you can **transfer** your knowledge to analysing a phenomenon in novel ways or to conducting a novel study based on previous and current research.

When writing a theoretical MA thesis, you proceed in the same way as described for BA theses and E2 term papers (Komplexe Hausarbeiten) above. In the case of an empirical MA thesis, you design or conduct your own research study (i.e., you collect new data), or you use data taken from linguistic corpora.

We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- present the linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way;
- find and apply appropriate methods of data collection, coding and analysis;
- provide a critical reflection and conclusion;
- submit your paper in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).

#### 4.6 Modul P: Portfolio

The length of a portfolio is approximately 10 pages. In the portfolio, you demonstrate that you can apply the methods that you have acquired in the class 'Research methods in Linguistics' to write a research proposal for a linguistic research project. The research proposal focuses on methodological aspects (i.e., research design, procedure, and data analysis). You are not required to actually carry out the project, but you may use this research proposal for a term paper you subsequently write in an E2 class or for the BA thesis.

We expect you to:

- provide a short theoretical background for your topic / research question;
- report and argue for your choice of research design and methods for data collection, coding and (statistical) data analysis;
- show which graphs, figures and tables you would use for data presentation.