words

utterances

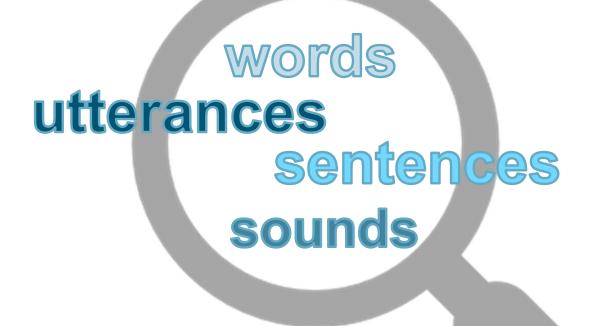sentences

sounds

How to Complete a Data Analysis

A Guideline for Data Analyses
in English Linguistics

Technische Universität Braunschweig

Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Sprachwissenschaft

How to Complete A Data Analysis

('Projekt mit Praxisanteil')

Manual for Linguistics

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Contents

1   Introduction

To earn credits in a seminar in the module A2, you have to complete a 'Projekt mit Praxisanteil', which takes the form of a data analysis in English linguistics. The length of the data analysis should be approximately 4 to 6 pages (1,200 to 1,800 words).

The topic of your data analysis is based on one of the topics discussed in class. Topics, individual tasks and typically data will be given to students individually in the final week of classes.

2   Content

Typically, you first describe the phenomenon/topic. Then you provide a data analysis to either illustrate the phenomenon and/or answer a question as well as discuss it. You demonstrate that you can apply the approaches, models or theories presented in class to linguistic data.
We expect you to:

- provide the theoretical background for your topic;
- provide linguistic details in a correct, clear and concise way
- discuss the results of your analysis in relation to your topic;
- submit the written documentation of your project in appropriate form (see Manual of Style).
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In a data analysis you generally proceed in two steps.
(1) You closely analyse your data in accordance with your tasks. You document the results of your analysis of individual examples and quantify your data (e.g. with percentages, means (if applicable)). You illustrate your data by providing summary tables and figures. Typically, you will work in Excel or a similar file format, but for some topics other file formats might be more useful. Your seminars will include practice sessions in which you will learn how to analyse, organise and document data.
(2) You provide a text document in which you introduce your topic, as well as verbalise, present and discuss your results (as requested in your tasks).

3   Form

3.1   Analysis file

Your analysis file (e.g. Excel file) should contain:

- Your detailed analyses for the individual examples/words/utterances (usually provided as tables).
  - Note: The analysis of the individual examples must be transparent. If necessary, provide annotated versions of your examples.
  - If you have difficulty analysing an example, you need to provide a discussion on how you arrived at your final analysis or why you excluded it from the analysis. In these cases, you mark these examples in the analysis file and discuss them in the text file (see 3.2).

- If you are asked to quantify your data (e.g. count occurrences, provide percentages), your calculations need to be transparent (e.g. by using appropriate formulas in Excel, or by explaining your procedure in written form).
- If requested: Summary tables and figures

3.2 Text file

Your text file should contain:

- Title sheet
- Table of contents
- Brief introduction to your topic
- Individual chapters (e.g., one for each task you have to do). Try to find a short title rather than 'Task 1'.
  - Make sure you include a description of your procedure for analysis in the chapter in which you present the results.
- Brief conclusion
- List of references
- Statement of non-plagiarism (and the checklist)

Please note that tables and figures do NOT count as text, so it is best to count the actual words to check the appropriate length of your work (1,200 – 1,800 words). Furthermore, your text file must not contain the detailed analyses of all individual examples. It typically only includes a few examples and analyses for illustration, as well as summary/results tables and figures (which should be presented and verbalized adequately).

3.3 Manual of style

For detailed information concerning the aspects
- Title Page
- References
- Quotations
- References in Text
- Examples and Data
- Orthographic and Formal Conventions

refer to the 'Manual of Style' (see departmental website). It has additional important information that complements this guideline and that you need to pay heed to.

4 General Advice

4.1 Audience

When writing the data analysis, always keep in mind the target audience. You should write your data analysis for a hypothetical audience of fellow students who have basic knowledge of linguistics, yet no specialist knowledge of the subject matter at issue. In other words, you can assume knowledge of basic concepts in linguistics, but you still need to explain the particular terms, concepts, approaches, and theories relevant for the topic of data analysis.

4.2 Style

The writing style in linguistics is straightforward, that means clarity is its priority. It is perfectly acceptable to use first-person pronouns ('I, we') and active verbs and to have short sentences. Clarity always wins over verbosity! Avoid expressing your personal or emotional involvement with the topic. Stay on topic!

4.3 References and Quotations

Generally, papers in linguistics do not contain verbatim quotations; rather, ideas taken from other sources are paraphrased. This means you need to find your own words for expressing these ideas. As a guideline, your essay should not contain any – or, maximally, one or two – direct quotations. Only quote verbatim if it is virtually impossible to say the same thing in your own words. When referring to previous work, cite the name of the author(s) and the year of publication (e.g., White, 2003). When you refer to a specific idea or aspect, include the page number from the source (e.g., White, 2003, p. 42). For details, see the "Manual of Style".

4.4 Consult Research Papers

Consult published research papers for inspiration. Do not copy from them (see following section), but learn from them about structure, organisation and style of your essay.

4.5 Plagiarism

In your data analysis, you must absolutely avoid any form of plagiarism. Consult the guideline "How to Avoid Plagiarism" for details and examples. You are required to append the following statement of non-plagiarism (TU Braunschweig, 2023) at the end of your data analysis:

> "Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Prüfungsarbeit [„Titel der Arbeit"] selbstständig und ohne unzulässige fremde Hilfe sowie nur mit den von der Lehrperson zuvor bekannt gegebenen zulässigen Hilfsmitteln bearbeitet habe und dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit noch nicht für diese oder eine andere Prüfung eingereicht habe. Alle benutzten Quellen und Hilfsmittel habe ich vollständig angegeben.
>
> Mir ist bekannt, dass Täuschungsversuche –insbesondere nachgewiesene Plagiate sowie unvollständige Quellen- und Hilfsmittelangaben –nach §11, Abs. 4 der Allgemeinen Prüfungsordnung zum endgültigen Nichtbestehen einer Prüfung und somit zum Scheitern im Studiengang führen können." Add date, place and your signature.

You are also required to submit the checklist (including the list of resources) along with your data analysis.

5 Submission

Before you submit the data analysis, make sure you go through the checklist for submitting written work in English linguistics.

Once you have finalised your work, you will need to submit:

1. The text file (PDF format), via email to your instructor
2. The analysis file (e.g. Excel file) via email to your instructor
3. A printed version of the text file and the analysis file, plus the signed statement of non-plagiarism and the checklist/list of resources.

6   Selected References

This is a non-exhaustive list of references with more information on how to write term papers or theses.

Franck, N. (2002). *Fit fürs Studium: Erfolgreich reden, lesen, schreiben*. DTV.

Michael, M., & Felicity, O. D. (2008). *Academic vocabulary in use*. Cambridge University Press.

Kruse, O. (2000). *Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt: Ohne Schreibblockaden durchs Studium*. Campus.

Siepmann, D., Gallagher, J. D., Hannay, M., & Mackenzie, L. (2011). *Writing in English: A guide for advanced learners* (2nd ed.). UTB / Francke.