

CONVENTIONS FOR WRITING THE MASTER THESIS FOR LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY MODULES

GENERAL REGULATIONS

The students registered for the academic Master Study Programme in English Philology can choose to write a Master thesis (MA thesis) in the following fields: linguistics, English Language Teaching (ELT) Methodology, literature.

An MA thesis is ‘a student’s research work, which demonstrates acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge, methodological and organisational skills in a field or sub-field in the amount identified in the study programme. The thesis should prove the ability of a student to carry out research containing elements of innovation and practical application and to draft independent decisions’ (UL Senate Decision No. 162 of 28.04.2003 ‘Regulation on Final Tests at the University of Latvia’). The MA is written in English.

The MA thesis writing process consists of several stages, each with its own interim deadline (see for the specific deadlines: <http://www.hzf.lu.lv/studijas/studijudarbi/>):

- 1) The typed application (see Appendix 1), which is addressed to Head of the relevant Department and signed by the adviser, in which the author proposes a theme for the MA thesis;
- 2) The research proposal, in which the author formulates the research problem, briefly describes the theoretical background and the methodology of the planned research as well as adds the outline of the MA thesis;
- 3) The draft of the MA thesis, which includes a review of literature, a detailed description of the research methods, research results and a discussion of these results;
- 4) The submission of the final draft to the advisor;
- 5) The registration of the final version of the thesis, in which all the suggestions and changes noted by the adviser have been implemented (students upload an electronic copy and submit two bound copies of the MA thesis and five copies of the theses);
- 6) The presentation of the thesis.

PREPARATION OF THE ELECTRONIC COPY

The file with the final draft of the MA thesis is converted into the PDF format and uploaded in the University of Latvia informational system (LUIS). The abstract is also pasted in the provided slot in LUIS.

The electronic copy is saved under the name formed from the student's full name without diacritic marks and ID, e.g., Berzins_Janis_BJ93010. The size of the file being uploaded must not exceed 50 MB.

REGISTRATION OF THE MASTER THESIS

The MA thesis has to be printed in two copies – one with a hard cover and the other one – spiral bound. Five copies of the theses has the name and surname of the author, the title of the MA thesis.

Further, the MA thesis has to be registered and submitted in accordance with the general university requirements (see <http://www.hzf.lu.lv/studijas/studijudarbi/> : LU 03.02.2012 rīkojums Nr. 1/28 'Prasības noslēgumu darbu (bakalaura, maģistra darbu, diplomdarbu un kvalifikācijas darbu) izstrādāšanai un aizstāvēšanai Latvijas Universitātē') on the date specified by the faculty.

LENGTH OF THE MASTER THESIS

It is important to present the MA thesis according to the standards laid down by the Faculty of Humanities.

The length of the MA thesis is set between **60 to 70 pages**. The limits of length **include** a list of abbreviations/acronyms (optional), an introduction, chapters, conclusions, theses, references and a glossary (optional), but **exclude** appendices. Only under exceptional circumstances will permission be granted to exceed the limits. A student who needs to exceed the limits submits a formal application to Head of the relevant Department, supported by his/her advisor, but not later than one month before the date of the submission of the MA thesis.

STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER THESIS

1. COVER (see Appendix 2)
2. TITLE PAGE (see Appendix 3)
3. ANOTĀCIJA

It is a precise translation of the abstract (see point 5 below). The key words (Atslēgvārdi) are also translated.

4. ABSTRACT

The length of the abstract is not more than 850 characters with spaces. It comprises the following information:

- ❖ background/topic;
- ❖ purpose;
- ❖ methods;
- ❖ results;
- ❖ conclusions.

After a paragraph long abstract, key words are added, i.e. 4-8 words or phrases characterising the theme and research methods, for example:

Key words: essay writing, argumentative essays, coherence, organizational patterns

5. CONTENTS (see Appendix 4)

The table of contents is designed automatically.

6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS (optional)

7. INTRODUCTION:

The introduction states concisely:

- ❖ background of the study;
- ❖ significance of the problem;
- ❖ goal of the research paper;
- ❖ hypothesis or research questions;
- ❖ enabling objectives;
- ❖ research methods;
- ❖ theoretical framework;
- ❖ data collection techniques (where applicable);
- ❖ research subjects/participants/population (where applicable);
- ❖ corpus of the texts analysed (where applicable);
- ❖ short summary (1-2 sentences) of each chapter.

8. CHAPTERS

This body of the thesis deals with the theoretical and empirical aspects of the research and is organised in chapters and subchapters, with chapter and subchapter headings. Each chapter starts with a short (e.g. a paragraph long) introduction and conclude with a paragraph that briefly summarizes the chapter, draws conclusions and looks ahead to the next chapter, indicating the readers what they may expect.

The chapters include:

Literature review – a review of the theoretical and empirical literature, providing the theoretical background to the problem under research.

❖ **Empirical research** – empirical data are used to validate the proposed hypothesis or answer the research questions:

➤ **Methodology** – a description of the methodology used in the study. Depending on the field of research, the methodology section may comprise:

- method, for example a case study;
- data collection instruments/ research tools, for example, questionnaires;
- description of the corpus of the texts analysed;
- procedure of the research;

➤ **Results of the study** – a presentation of the results, organized in terms of the hypothesis/research questions.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The chapters are followed by relevant conclusions drawn on the basis of the data. This section briefly summarizes and generalizes the main findings of the research, both theoretical and empirical, and may describe practical implications, limitations of the research and directions for future investigations. Thus, it comprises:

- ❖ an introductory paragraph including a restatement of the goal and the hypothesis/research questions;
- ❖ summary of the research results;
- ❖ discussion of their meaning in a broader context, including strengths and weaknesses of the research, and recommendations and suggestions for further research.

10. THESES

Theses are the most significant findings made while performing the research; ten to twelve theses would be sufficient.

11. REFERENCES

This part of the thesis lists books, articles and other secondary sources used while writing the thesis. Only the sources referred to in the body of the thesis are listed. Items in the references are numbered and listed alphabetically:

- ❖ Latin characters (English, Latvian, then German);
- ❖ Cyrillic characters (Russian);
- ❖ Websites without the author and the title.

The section below outlines the most common entries for writing items in the references. If any questions are not answered here, one should consult his/her advisor.

❖ **Book by one author:**

Name of author Year of publication Title Place of publication Publisher
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Cook, G. (1989) *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Porte, G. K. (2010) *Appraising Research in Second Language Learning: a practical approach to critical analysis of quantitative research*, 2nd ed. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.

❖ **Book by several authors:**

Give the names in the same order as they are on the title page.

Swales, J. M. and Feak, C. B. (1994) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English*. Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press.

❖ **Chapter or article in an edited collection:**

Coady, J. (1979) A psycholinguistic model of the ESL reader. In R. Mackay, B. Barkman, and R. R. Jordan (eds.) *Teaching Reading Skills* (pp. 219-223). London: Longman.

❖ **Book with an editor:**

Celce-Murcia, M. (ed.), (2001) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

❖ **Dictionaries and encyclopaedias:**

Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1992) Essex: Longman.

❖ **Journal or magazine article:**

Name of author Year of publication Title Journal Volume Number/issue Page numbers
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Brown, B. (1994) Reading for research. *Journal of Education*, 1 (1): 21-4.

❖ **Doctoral dissertation:**

Thompson, P. (2001) *A Pedagogically-Motivated Corpus-Based Examination of PhD Theses: Macrostructure, Citation Practices and Uses of Modal Verbs*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Reading: University of Reading.

❖ **Online sources:**

The Internet-assessed information has to be provided in full form. Then the document's URL (Internet address) after *Available from* and the date when it was *accessed* (that is, the date on which the source has been viewed or downloaded) are written:

Brown, B. (2003) *Research*. London: University of London. Available from <http://www.oup.com/elt/global/> [Accessed on 2 January 2021].

If **only the Internet address is known**, it appears at the end of the list under a separate heading *Online sources*, numbered anew, for example

Online sources

- [Online 1] Available from <http://www.oup.com/elt/global/> [Accessed on 2 January 2021].

❖ **Newspaper or magazine article:**

Kelly, P. (2010) Labor leadership change rewrites rulebook. *Australian*, 24 June. Available from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/labor-leadership-change-rewrites-rulebook/story-e6frg74x-1225883864100> 7 [Accessed on 7 July 2021].

❖ **Films:**

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002) [Film] Directed by: Chris Columbus. USA: Warner Brothers.

Other relevant details can also be added, for example

Pride and Prejudice (1995) [Film] BBC/A&E mini-series, (300 min). Directed by: Simon Langton; Screenplay by Andrew Davies.

❖ **DVD and video:**

Life of Campus (2006) [DVD] London: Imperial College London.

Fragile Earth, 5 (1982) *South American Wetland: Pantanal*. [Video:VHS]. Henley: Watchword Video.

If the Video/DVD publication year is different from the film release year, then the year of publication is also indicated in the square brackets. If the producer (i.e. manufacturer of the disc) differs from the original producer, this is mentioned as well:

Pride and Prejudice (1995) BBC/A&E mini-series, 6 parts (300 min). [DVD 2002, AVG Videos]. Directed by Simon Langton; Screenplay by Andrew Davies.

❖ **TV recordings:**

World in action (1995) *All Work and No Play*. [Video: VHS]. London, ITV, 21st January 1996.

❖ **CD-ROMs**

CD-ROM entries usually start with an author or editor or the title of a particular text:

James, A. (2002) Heart attack. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [CD-ROM]. London: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

❖ **Government and legal documents**

Department of the Environment (2013) *Clean Air*. Available from

<http://www.environment.gov.au/cleaner-environment/clean-air.html> [Accessed on 5 November 2021].

Child Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2005 (Qld).

The list of references has a separate heading **Analysed texts**, aligned left, 12 pt. Each item starts with the acronym chosen. A sample of the list of references is provided below:

References

- 1) Flower, R. (1991) *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- 2) Julian, P. M. (2011) Appraising through someone else's words: The evaluative power of quotations in news reports. *Discourse & Society*, 22 (6): 766–780. Available from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0957926511411697> [Accessed on 12 February 2020].

Online sources

- 1) [Online 1] Available from <https://www.cambridge.org/core> [Accessed on 12 February 2020]

Analysed texts

- 1) [T 1] Elliot, L. (2019) George Soros: China is using tech advances to repress its people. *The Guardian*, 24 January. Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/24/george-soros-china-using-tech-advances-to-repress-its-people> [Accessed on 12 February 2020].
- 2) [T 2] Graham, R. (2017) Global press freedom plunges to worst level this century. *The Guardian*, 30 November. Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/30/press-freedom-at-all-time-low-journalist-safety-article-19-v-dem-study> [Accessed on 12 February 2020].

12. GLOSSARY (optional)

Glossary may contain definitions of the key terms. It is given only when the term is:

- ❖ often used ambiguously in the research area;
- ❖ too general and needs to be specified.

13. APPENDIX/APPENDICES (optional)

Appendices comprise only the material that is relevant to the research. The following material is appropriate for appendices: tests, questionnaires, teaching materials used or designed, visual aids, text corpora, less important tables and figures, intermediary results and calculations or other kinds of illustrative material. Appendices are numbered with Arabic numbers, provided with headings and credited properly (if relevant), for example,

Appendix 1: Lesson Plan

14. ATTESTATION PAGE (Dokumentārā lapa) (see Appendix 5)

FORMATTING

The text is written and organized according to the following requirements:

Paper, font, point size, page numbers

- ❖ A4 size white paper, text on one side;
- ❖ Word processed using Times New Roman;
- ❖ Unjustified right edge;
- ❖ 14 pt. bold for headings, title case, centred, but 12 pt. bold for subheadings, sentence case, aligned left;
- ❖ 12 pt. for the main text of the thesis and long quotations;
- ❖ 11 pt. for the captions and the text of tables and figures;

The page numbers are centred and numbered consecutively (see Appendix 4). The pages are separated by page breaks. Numbers start with the list of abbreviations and acronyms (if any) or the introduction (see guidelines for page numbering at

<http://www.hzf.lu.lv/studijas/studijudarbi/>).

Spacing

- ❖ Spacing between letters is normal;
- ❖ Spacing between lines throughout the MA paper, including the list of references, is 1.5 pt.;
- ❖ There is no extra space between paragraphs; each paragraph is indented by 1 cm, except the first;
- ❖ Long quotations, footnotes, tables and figures are single spaced (1 pt.).

Margins

❖ 2.0 cm for top, bottom, and right margins; 3.0 cm for left margins;

Chapters and subchapters

Each chapter starts on a new page and contains at least two subchapters, if used at all. Subchapters do not start on a new page. Capital letters in bold are used for headings; small letters in bold are used for subheadings. A full stop is not used after the heading or subheading. One empty line is left before and one empty line after each subheading.

Abbreviations and acronyms

The first time an abbreviation is used, the term is spelt out in full, with the abbreviation shown in brackets immediately afterwards, e.g. English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Further on, the term may be shown as an abbreviation. The same refers to acronyms.

Tables and figures

Conventionally, tables are referred to as *Tables*, while anything pictorial (be it a graph or a photograph) is called a *Figure*. These words are written in italics only in captions, but not in the text. They are numbered by chapter, i.e. the first figure (even if the only one) in chapter two would be Figure 2.1, the first table in chapter two would be Table 2.1, the second table would be Table 2.2 and so on. If the fourth table is inserted in chapter 3.1.1, it would be Table 3.4. The same system refers to Figures. The caption itself is in bold, for example,

Table 1.1 Linking words and phrases (Swales and Feak, 1994: 22)

Heading	Heading
Text	Text

The captions of tables are written above, whereas the captions of figures are written below the data.

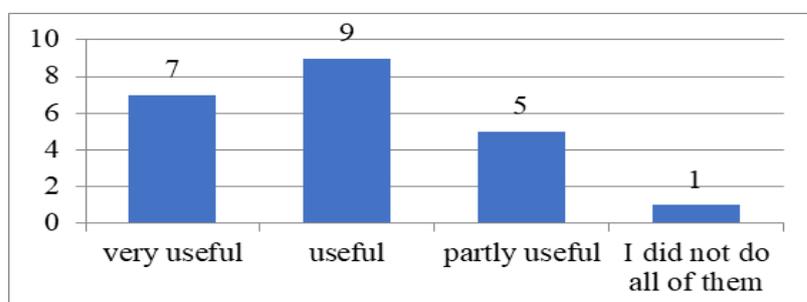


Figure 1.1 The students' opinion on the use of the tasks (N of students)

In-text citations

- ❖ The **quotation, paraphrase and summary** of the author's words or ideas are acknowledged, i.e. the author's surname, the year of publication and the page number(s) are credited:

'The study of "speaker meaning" is called pragmatics' (Yule, 1996: 3).

'[...] "All my books investigate the end of Eden and the possibility of its reconstruction"' (Doucornet, 1999: 3 quoted in Trendel, 2013: 106).

'The learners' results, rather than being limited to a numeric grade, provide meaningful feedback and promote learning' (Brown and Hudson, 1998, discussed in Czura, 2013: 22).

Only the source read is credited in the References.

- ❖ If a quotation is translated, the translator's name is mentioned in brackets (e.g. translated by A. Ozols).
- ❖ If there is **no publishing date**, (n. d.) is written instead of the year both in the body of the text and in the list of references, for example (Brown, n. d.: 5).
- ❖ If reference is to **the whole work**, it is not necessary to give a page number:

Stern (1983) argues that the language user knows the rules governing his native language.

- ❖ With any **video/audio recording**, if the author is not known the title of the film or series is cited in the running text. Series titles are followed by the year of release in brackets:

World in Action (2002) depicts ...

The beginning of the **exact scene** is indicated by adding minutes and seconds:

'Mrs. Bennet: You should have seen how handsome and elegant he is!' (*Pride and Prejudice*, 1940: 5' 02").

- ❖ If **more than one source** is cited, they are placed in chronological rather than alphabetical order:

A number of research studies have been conducted into the effect of motivation on language acquisition (Smith, 1995; Brown, 1997; Anderson, 2002).

- ❖ **Short quotations** are incorporated into the text:

According to Jordan (2001: 98), 'It is important to acknowledge the source of the quotations; otherwise, you may be accused of plagiarism'.

Note: When quoting, single quotation marks are used. When the quoted material contains yet another quotation, the second quotation is enclosed in double quotation marks:

Bach and Harnish (1982: 188) argue that "'speak colloquially" is almost as empty as "speak idiomatically" is obscure if it has nothing to do with using idioms'.

- ❖ **Longer quotations** (more than three lines in length) are set out separately. They are single-spaced and indented from the left-hand margin by 1 cm and written without any quotation marks:

Jordan considers that

the *main features* [italics added] of academic writing are as follows: it is formal in an impersonal [...] style (often using impersonal pronouns and phrases and passive verb forms); cautious language [may, might, would, can, could, seem, appear a. o.] is frequently used in reporting research and making claims. (Jordan, 2000: 88)

- ❖ **Square brackets** tell the reader that the writer has added his or her own words to the quotation. An ellipsis in square brackets, i.e. [...], is used to show that part of the quotation has been omitted.
- ❖ To refer to a **website without the author and the title**, Online 1 is written. In the list of references, the Internet sources are mentioned in order of appearance in the text:

A number of research studies have been conducted into the effect of motivation on language acquisition (Online 1).

To refer to a website with the author, but no page numbers, Online is written instead of the page numbers, e.g. (Brown, 2010: Online; Brown, n.d.: Online).

- ❖ If there are **more than three authors**, all their names appear when a reference to the publication is made for the first time. Then, only the first author is mentioned followed by *et al.* meaning ‘and others’, for example (Waters et al., 1999). In the list of references, all the authors are named.
- ❖ Use **ibid.** (Latin for ‘in the same place’) to avoid repeating the author’s name if the text continuously refers to the same source on the same page:

Quotations are the exact words of the author, which should be accurate, with the same punctuation and spelling (ibid.).

Note: If the page number is different, it is added, for example (ibid.: 1-2).

- ❖ If a reference is made to **two different items by the same author in the same year**, *a* or *b* is added to the year, for example (Cook, 1999a, 1999b). The same letters are used in the list of references.
- ❖ If a reference to a **course book is made** in the body of the text, it is more convenient to cite also the title or if the title is long, then the first three words are cited which are followed by three dots.

- ❖ When a **literary work** is first introduced in the text, the title and the author are mentioned; the publication date may be omitted. If one book is under analysis, only page numbers can be written. A full reference is given in the list of references.
- ❖ If a work is produced by an **organization**, the name of the organization is used instead of the author's surname. In the running text, a proper reference with the corporate author and publishing date is given, for example (Ministry of Education and Science, 2021).
- ❖ In order to cite the texts analysed, acronyms could be used, for example A1, A2 (or T1, T2). All sample sentences are introduced and displayed:

As shown in Example 1 (henceforth E1), the link verbs were used most frequently (15 instances out of 30) in the present simple tense:

[1] She's a very charming and pretty girl. [A1]

The acronym is introduced in the running text above:

Thirty articles (henceforth As) were chosen for analysis. The volume of A1 and A2 was

Appendix 1

Application (typed)

Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātes

_____ nodaļas vadītājam

(vārds, uzvārds)

_____ maģistra studiju programmas

_____ semestra studenta/es

(vārds, uzvārds)

(studenta apliecības Nr.)

iesniegums.

Lūdzu apstiprināt maģistra darba tematu (nosaukums jānorāda latviešu un angļu valodā):

Darba vadītājs: _____
(vārds, uzvārds)

Rīgā, _____
(datums)

(studenta paraksts)

Saskaņots: _____
(darba vadītāja paraksts)

(datums)

Apstiprinu: Nodaļas vadītāja _____
(paraksts)

(datums)

Appendix 2
Cover of Master Thesis

LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE

MAGISTRA DARBS

RĪGA 2021

Appendix 3
Title Page of Master Thesis
UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES
[16 pt., centred]

TITLE IN ENGLISH
[18 pt., bold, centred]

TITLE IN LATVIAN
[16 pt., bold, centred]

MASTER THESIS
[16 pt., centred]

Name Surname
[14 pt., bold]

Matriculation card No.

Adviser: prof./assoc. prof./assist. prof. Inta Liepa
[14 pt., align right]

RIGA 2021
[16 pt., centred]

Appendix 4
Contents Page (created automatically)

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Appendix 5

Dokumentārā lapa

Maģistra darbs „Nosaukums angļu valodā” (Nosaukums latviešu valodā) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Ieva Kalna *I.Kalna* 15. 05. 2021.

Rekomendēju/nerekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: profesore Dr.Philol. Inta Kalniņa *I.Kalnina* 15. 05. 2021.

Recenzents: docents Dr.Philol. Jānis Bērziņš

Studiju metodiķe: Ineta Bērziņa *I.Berzina* 20. 05. 2021.

Darbs iesniegts Anglistikas nodaļā 20. 05. 2021.

Darbu pieņēma:

Darbs aizstāvēts maģistra gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

2021. gada..... jūnijā, prot. Nr., vērtējums

Komisijas sekretāre: lektore Anda Kociņa *A.Kociņa*

Conventions approved by:

The Department of English Studies

1 March 2021