

Sensorveiledning, ENG4111 – Corpora in English Language Research

Generic guidelines

The exam is a term paper on a topic chosen by the candidate, but approved by the teacher. The language of the term paper is English. In the assessment both content and language will be considered, as well as the appropriate presentation of quotations, references and linguistic examples. The evaluation and marking of the candidate's performance on the exam follow the underlying principles regarding analytical skills, judgement and independent thinking, according to the general [evaluation criteria](#) specified by "Universitets- og høyskolerådet".

The content of the paper, as well as the assessment of it, should reflect the stated aims and learning outcome of the course, namely that the students should demonstrate that they:

- have insight into corpus linguistic methods as applied in English language Research.
- understand how to select and work with electronic text corpora for different types of language studies.
- know how to use computer tools for analysing and handling corpus data.

The term paper should take up approx. 10 standard pages excluding front matter and references. (One standard page = a page of running text with 1.5 line spacing and a 12 pt font, c. 400 words.). The *minimum* acceptable length is 6 standard pages (plus front matter and references, 2400 words).

The candidates have to write a paper where they draw on empirical material from one or more corpora, i.e. the term paper is by definition corpus-based. To reflect the content/aims of the course, the paper needs to include some general background to corpus linguistic methods and a brief description of the corpora applied. It is important that candidates show that they have understood the main principles of corpus research, notably how to analyse and manage large quantities of data in a linguistically sound manner.

Students are expected to refer to their course reading in their papers, and it is expected that they should also be able to find other secondary sources relevant to their topic.

The term paper is expected to follow normal conventions of academic writing with respect to form, structure and the appropriate use of sources and references. The students have been made aware of the university's rules for citation (and against plagiarism) as stated at <http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/sources-citations/> and are expected to abide by these. The students may use different styles of references (we do not require the use of one specific style), although they have been told that an author-date style is preferred, and that the list of references should be alphabetic by author's last name.

The following list of elements should normally be used to structure the term paper, although this need not be a template as such.

- **Introduction.** State your aim briefly and give the reasons why the subject of your paper is worth writing about.
- **Theoretical background / literature review:** Give a brief, critical survey of earlier work relevant to your subject.
- **Aim and scope.** State your research question more precisely. Tell the reader what aspect(s) you intend to investigate as well as what will be left out.
- **Material.** State the nature and limitations of your corpus data. Consider whether the nature of your data is likely to affect the results in an important way.

- **Method.** (a) State along what lines your investigation will be conducted. Mention any research tools you use (e.g. corpus software, databases, statistical tools ...)
(b) Define your terms and principles of classification.
- **Analysis and discussion.** Present the results of your study of your corpus material, and then interpret your findings (functional interpretation of linguistic features). You may want to present some results in the form of tables or graphs. Focus on one aspect at a time. Support your arguments with reference to the data and give examples.
- **Conclusion.** To what extent have you been able to answer your research question(s)? Give a brief summary of your results and state the conclusions you can draw on the basis of them. To what extent do your conclusions agree with what was known before? If some of your results are inconclusive, e.g. because you have not had enough material, say so. You may also indicate what aspects or areas require further study.