

## **General assessment guidelines for ENG4112 Methods in English Language Research**

The textbooks are listed in the semester pages, to which there is a link in the course description: <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ilos/ENG4112/>

The final exam is a portfolio consisting of four pieces of work, totalling 12–15 standard printed pages (12-point font, 1.5 line spacing). Obligatory activities for the course consist of first drafts of the four portfolio assignments. Students receive feedback on the assignments and should incorporate this feedback before they re-submit the assignments in the final portfolio.

### **The portfolio tests the following learning outcomes as specified in the course description:**

After completing this course you will have acquired:

- in-depth knowledge of important research methods in English language research
- the ability to formulate your own research questions
- the ability to choose appropriate theories and methods depending on your chosen subdiscipline and research questions, taking into account ethical considerations
- the ability to find, review and reference relevant literature
- the ability to write up a piece of research
- advanced academic writing skills within English language research
- the ability to communicate about linguistic research, theories and methods, both with specialists and the general public

### **Assessment guidelines for ENG4112**

- The examiners assess whether and to what extent the learning outcomes are reflected in the candidates' submitted portfolio.
- Content-wise, the examiners must evaluate
  - whether the candidates have answered the questions posed in the assignment texts (attached below), and whether the answers are correct;
  - whether correct definitions have been used and properly applied;
  - whether tables and figures are suitable and correct;
  - whether the argumentation is logical and valid.
- In the thesis outline, candidates must give a brief account of previous scholarly work on the topic, and they should attempt to show how their envisaged project fits into the current debate within their chosen field.
- Additionally, the examiners should assess the candidates' own English, the structure of the papers, and whether the candidates adhere to standard conventions in their linguistic commentary and style of referencing. Literature lists and the formatting of tables and figures should follow the style guide in Turabian (2018) in detail. The candidates should thus demonstrate not only that they can be consistent, but also that they can follow a style manual.

**Grades are awarded according to the national qualitative descriptions of letter grades**

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>General, qualitative description of evaluation criteria</b>
A	Excellent	An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.
B	Very good	A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking.
C	Good	A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas.
D	Satisfactory	A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
E	Sufficient	A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
F	Fail	A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

Reference:

Turabian, Kate (2018) *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

**ENG4112: Obligatory assignment 1:  
Formulating research questions and finding sources for a literature review  
(1 page + literature list)**

**Assignment: Find a research topic and search for relevant sources.**

In your hand-in, you should:

- 1) Specify the topic you chose
- 2) Formulate a specific and manageable research question
- 3) Specify different parts that a literature review would need to cover in order to form a good background for the investigation of your topic (e.g. definitions of important terms/concepts, outlines of theories/approaches the study will be conducted within, reviews of previous studies or similar topics, etc.)
- 4) Explain where and how you looked for sources and list the search terms you used (the ones that were useful)
- 5) Include a list of altogether about 25 relevant sources and an indication of which parts of the literature review they would fit into. The literature list should follow the Chicago author–date style as described in Turabian (2018).

**Note:**

- Write your answer as an essay, using complete sentences; do not use bullet points or sentence fragments.
- The research question does not have to be what you decide to investigate for your real master’s thesis, but we want to see that you can formulate a specific research question that could be investigated in principle.
- The topic does not have to be the same as for your thesis either, but if it is (or if it is something related), you can use the literature you find here for the thesis proposal that you have to write later.
- Be prepared to do several rounds of searches, skimming sources to help you narrow down your research question and perhaps finding more relevant sources after having narrowed it down and after having found out what parts the literature review should contain.

## ENG4112: Obligatory assignment 2 – Data types and methods (2–3 pages)

- Choose either A or B below, and decide, for each of the two research questions (RQs), (a) whether the study would be quantitative, qualitative or both. (b) Specify what the dependent and independent variables would be, and consider possible confounding variables and how you could eliminate/control them. Discuss (c) what data types would be needed to answer the research questions and (d) what methods and design would be appropriate to get hold of these data. Justify your decisions.
- Write your answer as an essay, using complete sentences; do not use bullet points or sentence fragments.
- Note that you are **not** supposed to answer the RQs, **nor** do the actual research, only specify what is asked for above.
- (If there are several possible data types and methods for a particular research question, you should mention this, but focus on **one** solution and **only** describe this **one** in detail.)

### Alternative A:

RQ1: How much variation is there between individual professional linguists in the use of commas after initial adverbials?

RQ2: Is explicit explanation of punctuation rules together with corrections more effective than just correcting the punctuation mistakes of pupils in upper secondary school? If so, how much more effective?

**OR**

### Alternative B:

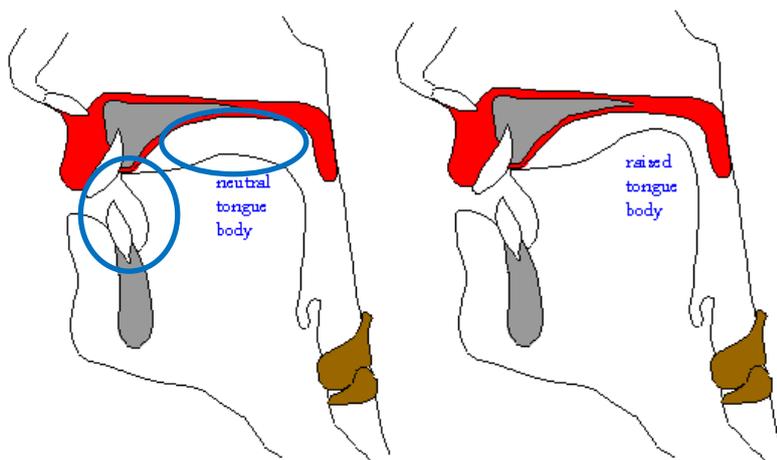
RQ1: How do native English-speaking adolescents (12-15 years old) and adults (30-40 years old) apologize in specific situations, and are there any differences between the two groups?

RQ2: Are there any differences in the collocations to *pardon* and *sorry* in British and American English?

## ENG4112 Assignment 3: Analysis and visuals

### Laterals in British English and Norwegian

British English has clear and dark allophones of laterals: clear allophones syllable-initially, and dark allophones syllable-finally. Norwegian has clear allophones primarily, but slightly dark allophones after /a(:)/ and /o(:)/. The laterals measured for this exercise are **all** somewhat **dark**. Clear allophones are pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge, and the tongue body lying low. Dark allophones are pronounced with tongue-tip contact too, but also with the back of the tongue raised against the soft palate (velum); see the figures below. This produces two resonance chambers of different sizes in the oral cavity (circles in the figure below), which we can measure: they are called **formants 1 and 2** (F1, F2) and may be seen in the spectrogram at the end of this document. One of the resonance chambers corresponds to F1, which is going to be low for clear laterals and slightly higher for dark laterals. **Another resonance chamber corresponds to the amount of velarisation: more velarisation lowers the F2, so F2 is going to be low for dark laterals and high for clear laterals.**



Clear /l/

Dark /l/ (with velarisation)

Even if some Norwegian laterals are classified as dark, they sound less dark than British English dark laterals. We want to find out exactly **what makes a lateral sound dark acoustically** and what contributes to the **darker quality of British laterals**. We had two hypotheses:

- (1) British dark laterals have **more velarisation** and hence a **lower F2**, but the **same F1**;
- (2) British dark laterals **last longer**.

Therefore, we measured both the F1 and F2 of British and Norwegian dark laterals to verify or falsify (1), as well as duration, both of the lateral alone and of the vowel+lateral sequence to verify or falsify (2).

In the accompanying Excel file, you will find raw data (acoustic measurements) of lateral sounds in English (12 tokens) and Norwegian (11 tokens). The headings for each column have the following meaning:

**Language:** English (1) and Norwegian (2)

**Word:** the particular word pronounced; note that the English and Norwegian words are maximally similar in terms of phonetic make-up and environment, and are all in final position, so this should not affect the result.

**LatF1:** the measurement of Formant 1 of the lateral, in Herz (Hz)

**LatF2:** the measurement of Formant 2 of the lateral, in Hz

**Totaldur:** the duration in milliseconds of the vowel+lateral

**Latdur:** the duration in milliseconds of the lateral only

Your task is to analyse the data set with a view to checking whether the two hypotheses are supported. (Tips: It will be important to calculate means for F1, F2, and duration of laterals in both languages.)

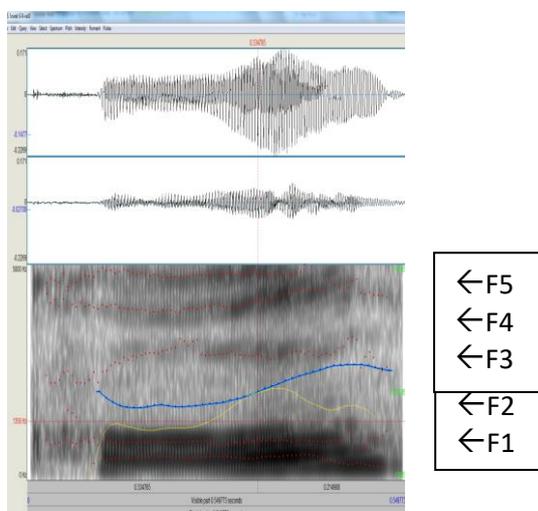
Make at least one table and at least one figure (in total, not for the same point) that illustrate your conclusions. Format, number and label the table(s) and figure(s) according to the principles in Turabian (2013). Write explanations to accompany the table(s) and figure(s) – see Rasinger (2013, 105).

Explain what kind of statistical test would be appropriate to calculate whether the differences between the measurements in the two languages are statistically significant. (You do not have to actually carry out the test.) You should take into account the data type you have when arguing for a particular test – see Rasinger (2013) and the slides from session 11.

Hand in only your Word document (not the Excel file). The document should contain an introduction giving some background about the goals of the study and the nature of the data you have received, a discussion of whether the data support the hypotheses – illustrated with your table(s) and figure(s), and a discussion of what statistical test would be appropriate to check the statistical significance of the results. (Write 3–4 pages.)

#### Note:

- When we rate the assignment (and final submission), we will be looking at the following:
  - That you can perform the necessary simple statistics
  - That you can create tables and figures and choose the displays that are most suited to show what you want to show
  - That you can format tables and figures following the guidelines in Turabian (2013)
  - That you can choose good table titles and figure captions
  - That you can make the text and the tables/figures support each other
- Write your answer as an essay, using complete sentences; do not use bullet points.



Spectrogram of *call*: the two dark bands at the bottom are the waveforms for the F1 (lower) and the F2 (upper); as you can see, F1 and F2 are very similar for the lateral and the preceding back rounded vowel.

/k/   /ɔ:/   /l/

Picture of data set for assignment 3 (the students received the data in an Excel file):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Language	Word	LatF1	LatF2	Totaldur	Latdur	
2	1	call1	593	1080	0.43	0.15	
3	1	call2	455	1009	0.55	0.17	
4	1	call3	438	1033	0.46	0.16	
5	1	ball3	477	867	0.49	0.22	
6	1	ball1	500	884	0.39	0.19	
7	1	ball2	504	833	0.36	0.19	
8	1	hall1	504	882	0.42	0.17	
9	1	hall2	532	866	0.45	0.24	
10	1	hall3	508	828	0.37	0.17	
11	1	call Ca1	489	835	0.23	0.09	
12	1	call Ca2	523	774	0.20	0.07	
13	1	call Ca3	482	962	0.26	0.13	
14	2	kål1	467	833	0.42	0.10	
15	2	kål2	447	1069	0.39	0.09	
16	2	kål3	490	1082	0.44	0.09	
17	2	ball2	475	1039	0.50	0.10	
18	2	ball1	523	1049	0.57	0.10	
19	2	ball3	590	965	0.40	0.08	
20	2	hall1	505	917	0.37	0.14	
21	2	hall2	473	1019	0.44	0.20	
22	2	kål Ca1	520	1011	0.29	0.09	
23	2	kål Ca2	543	1045	0.28	0.08	
24	2	kål Ca3	424	1080	0.33	0.10	
25							
26							
27							

# THESIS OUTLINE

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## **1. Introduction**

Write a couple of sentences stating the topic of your thesis.

## **2. Theory and literature review**

Explain which theory/theories you are going to use and what literature you have read and/or are planning to include in your literature review. Explain how your study links to previous research: What can you build on? What new knowledge do you aim to add?

## **3. Research questions**

State your research questions explicitly and in as much detail as you can.

## **4. Data and methods**

Describe the type(s) of data you will use and (if applicable) the method(s) you are going to use to collect the data, and give reasons for your choices.

## **5. Analysis**

Indicate how you are planning to analyse your data.

## **Source list**

List the sources you refer to in section 2 and in any other parts of the thesis outline.