

# Sensorveiledning, ENG4117 – 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 høskolerådet".

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 are able to:

- describe special features of non-native English;
- apply the methodological framework of contrastive interlanguage analysis;
- compare native and non-native English on the basis of corpus material;
- conduct a case study of selected features of advanced learner English.

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. 4000 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 learner corpora, i.e. the term paper is by definition corpus-based. The predominant methodological framework of the course, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis, typically requires a comparison of at least two writer groups, which may represent L1 and L2 production or different types of learners (different levels, different L1s). It is important that candidates show that they have understood the main principles of learner corpus research, notably how to analyse and manage large quantities of data in a linguistically sound manner and relating the findings to relevant issues of interlanguage, second language learning, transfer, etc.

Students are expected to refer to their course reading in their papers, and they should also be able to find and use other secondary sources relevant to their topic. They are not expected to use advanced quantitative methods, as the course does not include an introduction to statistics apart from being able to interpret the quantitative information presented in the course reading.

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 students have been given the following list of elements that a term paper should normally contain, although this need not be a template for the structure of the paper.

- **Introduction, aim and scope.** State your general aim *briefly* and give reasons why your topic is worth studying. Formulate your research question(s). Specify what aspect(s) you intend to investigate as well as what will be left out.

- **Literature review:** Give a brief, critical survey of relevant work dealing with your subject.
- **Material.** State the nature and limitations of your data. Consider whether the nature of your data is likely to affect the results.
- **Method.** (a) State along what lines your investigation will be conducted. (b) Define your terms and principles of classification. (c) If you are using statistics, describe briefly your methods/tools.
- **Analysis and discussion.** First you present the results of your analysis of the corpus material, and then you interpret them. You may want to present your results in the form of tables or lists of examples, or both. Focus on one aspect at a time. Support your arguments with reference to the data.
- **Conclusion.** To what extent have you been able to answer your research question? Give a general 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.
- Throughout the paper, give references to relevant sources.