

University of Cologne
Department of Linguistics
Sections General Linguistics and
Historical Comparative Linguistics

**Writing a Linguistics Term Paper:
Formal Guidelines**

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the following document is to introduce you to the formal requirements regarding form, structure, valid quotation style, etc., that are applied in linguistics in general as well in our department in particular. The format of these instructions may be used as an example.

2. Formal aspects

2.1. General layout

Table 1. Layout of an essay at the Department of Linguistics

Page margin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standard, i.e. 2.5cm on the left and right or up to 3cm on the right - For theses: about 3.5–4cm on the left for binding!
Font size, line spacing, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Font size: 12pt. - Single spacing for term papers; 1.5 spacing for theses - Justify (instead of the standard configuration “Flush Left”) - Activate automatic hyphenation
Font	<p>Appropriate fonts are serif fonts such as Times New Roman. Please ensure that linguistic special signs can be represented (IPA, diacritics...). For papers with a large phonetic transcription part, fonts developed by SIL International such as Doulos SIL and Charis are recommended (https://software.sil.org/products/). If necessary, modify the line spacing, simple to 1.15 is enough here.</p> <p>Please use typographic variation sparingly (various fonts, font sizes, colors, etc.).</p>
Page numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number the pages! - Front matter (table of contents, list of tables, figures and abbreviations): lower case Roman numbers, i.e. i, ii, iii, iv, etc. - Main matter (body): Arabic, first text page = page 1
Paragraphs	<p>To visually separate content sections, use paragraphs e.g. with indenting (Tab key), empty lines or bigger line spacing (under “Paragraph” in Word). One sentence paragraphs as well as “orphans” or “widow lines” (individual lines at the end or the beginning of a page) should be</p>

	avoided.
Headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbered (Tip: use automatic numbering and/or formatting styles) - Arabic numbers! - Heading levels should be distinguished by points, i.e. 1., 1.1.,1.2., 1.2.1., 1.2.2., etc., as well as bold and <i>italics</i> (like in this document) and/or different font sizes, depending on the number of levels. - Warning: a chapter 2.1. only makes sense if it is followed by a chapter 2.2.
Long quotations (3 lines or longer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They should have their own paragraph - Indented - 1–2pt. smaller - Simple line spacing - No quotation marks
Footnotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In English writing, footnote marks are placed after punctuation signs

2.2. Language examples

Examples of the object language should be in *italics*. In running text they should be directly followed by the translation in the metalanguage in **simple** quotation marks and separated from the element in the object language **by a space only**.

Nachtigall ‘nightingale’

Glossed language examples should follow the **Leipzig Glossing Rules** (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>). Glossed examples should have their own paragraph and be **numbered throughout the whole paper** with the numbers indicated in parentheses. **Do not take the numbers used in the source since their only purpose is to structure one’s own paper**. If it cannot be deduced from the context what the language used in the example is (for example, if your paper includes examples of a grammatical phenomenon in various languages), indicate the language in the example (with the language family if necessary) exactly like in the source, if the example does not come from data that have been

collected by yourself. Language examples should not be introduced without context, they should be commented in the text or, at least, mentioned, cf. example (1).¹

(1) Jaminjung (Schultze-Berndt 2009: 92)

nanggayan guny-bi-yarluga?

who 2DU.A.3SG.P-FUT-poke

‘Who do you two want to spear?’

The glossing abbreviations used in your paper should be listed and explained in a list of abbreviations or in a footnote to the first glossed example when they do not exactly follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules (for example, if you need to include a morphosyntactic category not considered in the Rules).

2.3. *Table of contents*

The table of contents at the beginning of the paper (between the title page or the cover sheet and the first text page) takes the shape of a table and provides information about the structure, content and scope of the paper. Using the customizable formatting styles “Heading 1 to *n*” in Word/LibreOffice/etc, it is possible to create an automatic table of contents, which can be automatically updated with a mouse click. This document’s table of contents can be used as an example.

2.4. *Tables, charts and figures*

Tables, charts and figures help to illustrate primary data and examples. They should be numbered, labelled and accordingly listed in a list of tables and a list of figures. Word’s labelling function can help to generate automatically lists of tables and figures. Just as for language examples, they should be referred to and commented in the text.

¹ This is how an explanation of the glossing abbreviations could look like in a footnote:

The abbreviations used in this paper are: 2 = second person, 3 = third person, A = agent, DU = dual, FUT = future, P = patient, SG = singular.

3. Structure of the paper

Table 2 shows the formal structure of a linguistic paper.

Table 2. Formal Structure of a paper

Form of the Department of Linguistics	Accessible under <i>Study > B.A./M.A. Programme > Useful Information for Students > Documents on good scientific practice</i>
(Cover)	Not necessary because of the mandatory form.
Table of contents	
(List of figures)	If paper includes figures.
(List of tables)	If paper includes tables.
(List of abbreviations)	For glossing abbreviations; as an alternative, list them in a footnote to the first glossed example and/or refer to the Leipzig Glossing Rules.
(Glossary)	Explanation of terms, if required.
Text of paper (page 1 starts here!) - Introduction - Main part - Conclusion	The structure of the paper's content varies depending on the problem, topic and goal.
References	The references (Ger. <i>Literaturverzeichnis</i>) is its own chapter but should not have a number.
(Appendix)	For primary data, detailed tables, transcripts, etc., that did not fit in the text.

4. Quotation style and references

Correct citations and “disclosure of the sources is an essential precept for a scientific paper’s integrity” [orig.: „[d]ie Offenlegung der Quellen [sind] ein wesentliches Gebot der Redlichkeit wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens“] (Stephany & Froitzheim 2009: 75). The Department of Linguistics uses the *Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics* developed by the Linguistic Society of America as the basis for correct citation style and bibliography. The Style Sheet’s original version is available at this link: <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/style->

[sheet 0.pdf](#). For a paper written in German, use the corresponding German conventions, which are identical to the ones used in the Style Sheet except for language specific terms (e.g. *Hrsg.* vs. *ed.*).

4.1. *Quotes: formalities and shortened citations*

Contrary to the conventions used in some other disciplines, quote references should **never be indicated in footnotes**. Instead, **shortened citations** are used directly in the text. Shortened citations are made of the author's last name and the year the source was published. They follow the quotation or the paraphrased paragraph in parenthesis (**Name Year: Page**). The source in parentheses is always part of the sentence, i.e. the period should be placed only after the closing parenthesis.

Um einer „grobrastrigen Strukturtypologie“ entgegenzuwirken, schlägt er vor, das Ganze aus verschiedenen Blickwinkeln zu betrachten (Scheutz 2005: 304).

If several works by one author published the same year are used in the paper, those works should be distinguished by low case letters placed after the year of publishing, e.g. (Müller 2000a; 2000b). Proceed similarly in the references for clarity. If the author is directly named in the text, only the year and the page number should be indicated in the shortened citation, e.g.

Hill (2013: 115) erklärt: „So entstanden die sogenannten ‚Einbanddrucke‘“.

or

Hill erklärt: „So entstanden die sogenannten ‚Einbanddrucke‘“ (2013: 115).

For works with two authors, both names should be mentioned with a “&” between them. In case of three authors, name the first author, place the second one after a comma and place a “&” between the second and third authors (without a comma). In case of four names or more, only the first name should be mentioned, followed by “et al.” (lat. *et alii* ‘and others’). Warning: in the list of references at the end of your paper, all authors should be named with their first and last name!

(Müller & Meyer 2004: 12)

(Müller, Meyer & Bauer 2003)

(Müller et al. 1999)

Direct quotes should be used sparingly (for example, only when it is phrased particularly elegantly or if it is a famous quote) — preferably paraphrase in your own words. Direct quotes should be written between “double quotation marks”, quotations within quotations between ‘single quotation marks’. Long quotes (longer than three lines) should have their own paragraph, be indented and written in a 1–2pt. smaller font size. Do not use quotation marks for indented quotations. In the case of indented quotes, shortened citations should be placed after the punctuation sign part of the quote:

From a cross-linguistic point of view, the prosodic marking of information-structural categories in these languages [i.e. West Germanic languages] is quite unusual and does not provide a good starting point for investigating the relationship between prosody and information structure in Austronesian languages of Indonesia. (Himmelman 2018: 348)

Omissions in quotations should be indicated by [...] (please ensure that the omissions don’t alter the meaning of the text!). Obvious typos or spelling mistakes in the quotes should be reproduced, but clearly marked by [sic] (lat. ‘so’) without quotation marks. Grammatical changes, for example, to ensure grammatical consistency with the introducing sentence, as well as your own remarks should be between square brackets, with e.g. “my remark” in the latter case. If another work is cited in the quotation, this should be indicated. Quotations from secondary sources should generally be avoided and you should check the cited work yourself instead, if possible. If you must cite from secondary sources, indicate this in a shortened citation as follows:

(Chomsky 1965: 2, cited in Fromkin et al. 2002: 98).

Under References, **both** sources need to be indicated as complete bibliographical entries.

4.2. *Bibliography*

All sources used to write your paper should be listed under References in alphabetic order by last name. If another source is cited in within a quotation (“quote within a quote”), this other source should also be indexed in the chapter References.

Like for scientific papers in general, the main principle to follow while creating a bibliography is consistency. In order to organize your bibliography more clearly, you can indent every line except the first line of source (special indent “Hanging indent”).

Haig, Geoffrey L. J., Nicole Nau, Stefan Schnell & Claudia Wegener (eds.). 2011. *Documenting Endangered Languages: Achievements and Perspectives* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 240). Berlin: de Gruyter.

Book and journal titles (= standalone publications) should be in *italics*. Titles of chapters in collections and of journal articles (= not standalone publications) should neither be in italics **nor be introduced by quotation marks**. Titles and subtitles of publications, whether standalone or not, should be separated by a colon. Exception: the main title ends with the punctuation “!” or “?”.

4.2.1. Monographs

The term monograph (from Greek *μονογραφία monographía* ‘individual scripture’) corresponds to a standalone work about *one* topic or a complex of topics written by one or several people. They should be indexed as follows:

Walker, Janice R. & Todd Taylor. 1998. *The Columbia guide to online style*. New York: Columbia University Press.

The first author should be named with the last name coming first, then all the other authors in the common format “FirstName LastName”. Names should be separated by commas, the last one by a “&”. The main pieces of information should be separated by periods. Place and publisher are to be separated by a colon. Write title and subtitle in *italics*.

4.2.2. Compilations & collections

Compilations are publications in book format gathering several essays (‘chapters’) by various authors about various topics (but mostly about one common complex of topics) in one volume. The people in charge of publishing are the editors (Ger. *Herausgeber*innen*), whose name should be indicated instead of the authors’ and who receive in singular the addition “(ed.)”, in plural “(eds.)” (Ger. „(Hrsg.)“ or „(Hrsgg.)“).

Bowden, John, Nikolaus P. Himmelmann & Malcolm Ross (eds.). 2010. *A journey through Austronesian and Papuan linguistic and cultural space. Papers in honour of Andrew Pawley*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Series, editions and volumes

If a monograph or compilation has been published in a series, indicate the title of the series and the number directly after the title of the monograph in parentheses (no italics). It is not mandatory to name the series. Whether you decide to name it or not, the main factor that remains here is consistency.

Lahiri, Aditi (ed.). 2000. *Analogy, leveling, markedness: Principles of change in phonology and morphology* (Trends in Linguistics 127). Berlin: de Gruyter.

If you cite from an edition other than the first edition (Ger. *Auflage, Aufl.*), indicate this after the title of the work:

Payne, Thomas E. 2010. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. 2. edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This is also the case for works with several volumes (Ger. *Bd.*, Engl. *vol.*):

Nedjalkov, Vladimir P. (ed.). 2007. *Reciprocal constructions*. Vol. 1. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

4.2.3. Essays in compilations

If you only cite an essay which is part of a compilation and not the compilation (which happens often), you should name the essay's author, followed by the year, title of the essay, "In" name of the editor, title of the compilation, page indications, place and publisher.

Himmelmann, Nikolaus P. 2010. Taking up the 'Pawley challenge': speech formulae and linguistic theory. In John Bowden, Nikolaus P. Himmelmann & Malcolm Ross (eds.), *A journey through Austronesian and Papuan linguistic and cultural space*, 663–671. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

4.2.4. Articles in journals

A large portion of the scientific literature is published in journals. Journals are published in regular intervals and are sorted by volume (year) and issue number (if the number of texts sent for a year needs to be published in several issues, which happens often). In case of journal articles, the title of the journal should be written in the bibliography entry after the title of the article (**without "in"!**). Volume/year, issue number, and page numbers should be written after. Do not insert a space between the volume and the issue number in parentheses (if available). Notice that the journal title is italicised, but not the article title.

Hellwig, Birgit. 2010. Different types of data: A case study of Goemai demonstratives. *Journal of West African Languages* 37(1). 7–22.

4.2.5. Reviews

In the case of a review, name first the reviewer and the publication year of the review. The reviewed publication should then be introduced by “Review by” and the author’s or publisher’s name. Finally, name the journal in which the review was published as well as the page numbers.

Reinöhl, Uta & Nikolaus P. Himmelmann. 2011. Rezension von Christoph Schroeder, Gerd Hentschel & Winfried Boeder (Hrsgg.). 2008. Secondary predicates in Eastern European languages and beyond. *Linguistic Typology* 15(1). 131–139.

4.2.6. Internet sources

Online sources should be consulted with caution since their content did not go through a peer reviewing process. Standard information such as author, years and title are to be treated here similarly as explained above. If the publication year cannot be clearly determined, you can omit it. Instead, write “n.d.” (“no date”, ger. *o.J.* ‘ohne Jahr’). Besides, the corresponding link as well as the date when the source was consulted or downloaded should be given.

Pedersen, Johan. 2005. The Spanish impersonal *se*-construction: Constructional variation and change. *Constructions* 1, <http://www.constructions-online.de> (3. April 2007).

Please note: reliable internet sources can be recognized by the fact that they readily provide this information – often already formatted as a bibliography entry to copy. Please note: this information should often still be aligned with the conventions described above, since not everyone follows the same standard. Appropriate reliable sources for linguists are, for example, *Ethnologue* (<https://www.ethnologue.com/>), *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online* (WALS) (<https://wals.info/>), as well as different databases and language corpora.

Publications that can be also found online besides the print version, for example as an e-book, free journal articles or book chapters as PDF, should be treated not as online sources but as journal articles, monographs, or contributions respectively. However, it can be relevant to add the DOI link – if available. DOI stands for Digital Object Identifier and is a type of permalink redirecting directly to the official website of the publisher or journal in which the text is to be found.

4.2.7. Lecture or seminar slides

Even though you should generally cite directly from the research literature used as the basis, you may exceptionally refer to contents introduced in a class. If you should cite directly from the slides used in a lecture or seminar, after consulting with the lecturer, the entry in the bibliography needs to include information about the name of the lecture/seminar, the topic and the date of the session as well as information about the university in which the lecture or seminar has been held:

Wegener, Claudia. 2020. Slides from the Seminar *Einführung in die Pragmatik*, Sitzung Deixis I, 15. April. Köln: Universität zu Köln.

In a shortened citation, the page number corresponds to the slide number in the PowerPoint presentation or PDF file provided by the lecturer.

4.2.8. Primary data from language archives/corpora/databases, software

If the primary data are taken from online archives or databases such as e.g. CHILDES (<https://childes.talbank.org>), this should also be listed under the chapter References. Many archives and databases, e.g. WALS or Ethnologue, offer ready-made bibliography entries providing the names of the authors/people in charge, year, place, etc. Please note: this information often needs to be adjusted to match the conventions described above! If you use computer software such as ELAN or Praat in an empirical work you should indicate those under References.

4.3. Tools: Zotero etc.

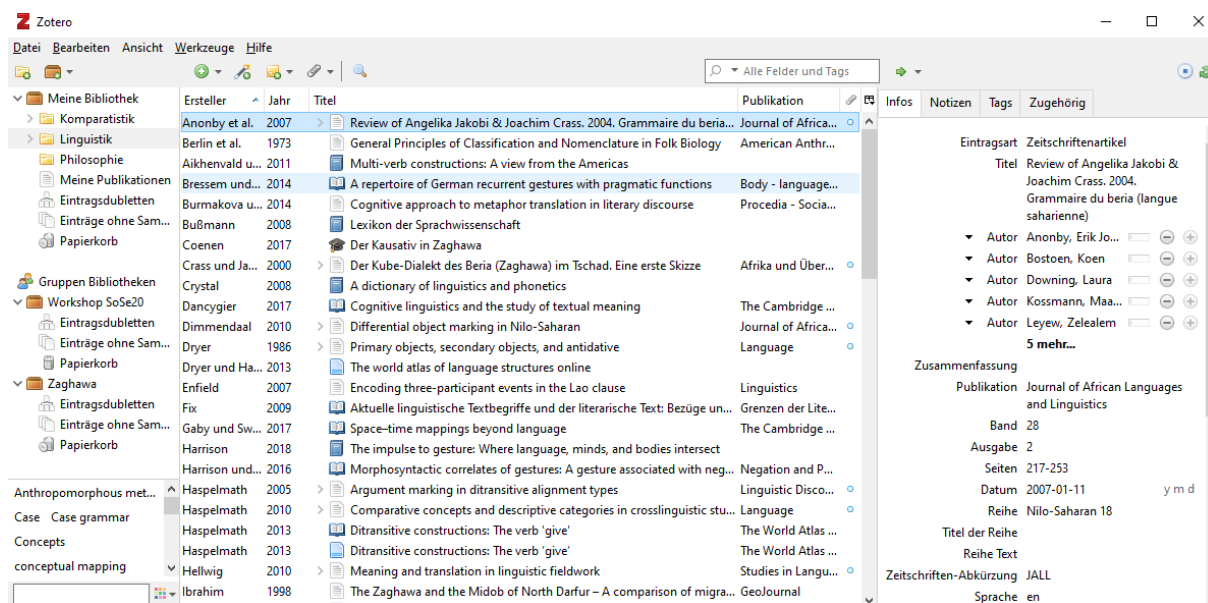


Figure 1. Zotero.

We strongly recommend using the reference manager system Zotero (cf. Figure 1). Zotero is a free, cross-platform, user-friendly open source tool which helps researching, collecting, organizing, and citing scientific publications, thus making the manual management of research literature and creation of bibliography obsolete. This might not seem critical while writing a term paper with just a handful references, but it can save you massive amounts of work when you write a larger text like a thesis. Corresponding plug-ins for your Internet browser as well as for your text processing software (Word, LibreOffice, etc.) can, with just a couple of mouse clicks, add publications found online with all the required metadata (and, if available, PDF) into your database and create a shortened citation in your text and a complete reference according to the *Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics*' guidelines at the end of your document. This guarantees that all cited works – and only those – appear in your bibliography. The earlier you start to familiarize yourself with Zotero and to create your own database of research literature, the more time (and frustration) you save in your studies – and not just in linguistics, because Zotero has more than 9000 citation styles as options! Instead of Zotero, you can use Citavi or Microsoft EndNote (those are not free but obtainable via the university).

5. Gender-sensitive language

We strongly encourage you to adhere to the gender-sensitive discourse practices, embraced in the University's guidelines:

https://gb.uni-koeln.de/gender_sensitive_language/index_eng.html

English does not face the same issues as languages with grammatical gender do (cf. German nouns with human reference), but this has relevance e.g. in the choice of pronouns. One convention is this:

Finally, a note on my use of gender-marked personal pronouns in describing conversational exchanges: I follow the convention that the speaker is, unless otherwise stated, female, and the hearer or addressee male. (Lyons 1999: xvii)

Another time-venerated option you might want to consider is the gender-neutral singular *they* (as in: “By using the discourse marker *ladno* the speaker indicates that they wish to...”).

At the same time it must be stressed that your decision to (not) use gender-sensitive language will have no effect on the grading of your work.

6. Tips for text processing software

6.1. For (beginning) LaTeX users

Useful manuals and how-to's for (La)TeX can be found on Overleaf (<https://www.overleaf.com/learn>) or in Adam Liter's handout (with a special focus on linguistics; <https://www.adamliter.org/content/LaTeX/latex-workshop-for-linguists.pdf>).

6.2. For wysiwyg users (MS Office Word, LibreOffice, Pages etc.)

Enjoy the functions available on your text processing software! Microsoft Word (which you can get as a student for only 5€ a year via University of Cologne; cf. <https://bildung365.de>), and LibreOffice/OpenOffice (free of charge) have for example the function “Formatting styles” with which you can save and label formatting configurations, cf. Figure 2. You just need to preconfigure different heading levels, language examples, indented quotes, etc. once with the corresponding line spacings, paragraphs, numbering and formatting, then you can always resort to them.

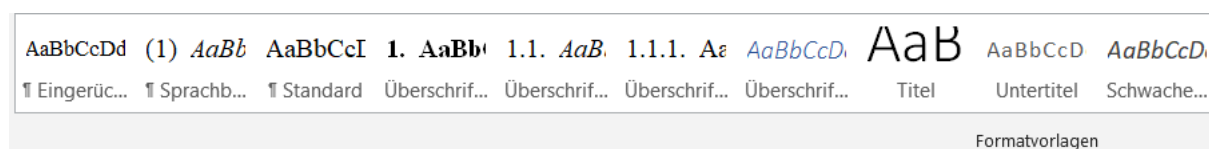


Figure 2. Formatting styles in Word.

It is sometimes necessary to add “section breaks” in Word. They create a kind of invisible barrier after which you can apply different rules. For example, it can be used for page numbers when “page 1” does not correspond to the first page of the document but to the first text page after the cover and the table of contents. You can find these functions under the tab *Layout*.

In Word, you can not only create an automatic table of contents and list of figures under the tab *References*, but also add cross-references. It is particularly helpful when, for example, you want to get an automatic numbered example or chapter in your text. Using this function, numbering in text can be updated with [F9] so that they correspond to the number of the mentioned example, chapter or figure, cf. Figure 3 and Figure 4.

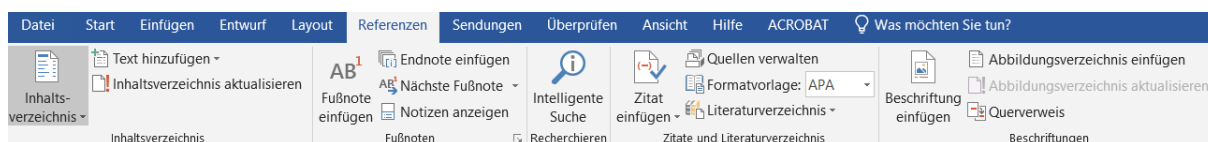


Figure 3. Tab “References” with the functions “Table of contents”, “Cross-Reference” and “List of figures”

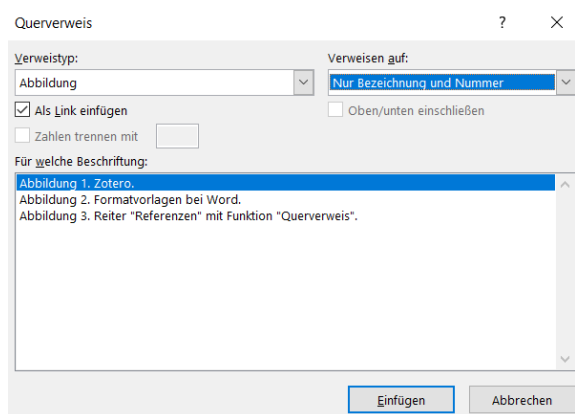


Figure 4. Function “Cross-Reference”

A text with a clean appearance does not just demand conforming formatting following the guidelines, but also the choice of the correct typographic elements on the smaller level. The following typographic mistakes are often seen:

Acute accent instead of apostrophe (**John´s bike* versus *John’s bike*)

Hyphen (-) instead of dash (–)

Inch or minute signs (" ") instead of quotation marks (Ger. „...“ and ‚...‘, Engl. “...” and ‘...’)

Superfluous spaces

These can be made visible using the function “Show paragraph marks and other hidden formatting symbols”; the corresponding button under the tab *Start* has the symbol



Updated versions of Word generally “know” which sign is the correct one and will replace it accordingly, which however does not work all the time. Therefore, it can be worth it to keep an eye for smaller typographic mistakes in order to avoid them altogether.

References

- Bowden, John, Nikolaus P. Himmelmann & Malcolm Ross (eds.). 2010. *A journey through Austronesian and Papuan linguistic and cultural space. Papers in honour of Andrew Pawley*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Haig, Geoffrey L. J., Nicole Nau, Stefan Schnell & Claudia Wegener (eds.). 2011. *Documenting Endangered Languages: Achievements and Perspectives* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 240). Berlin: de Gruyter.
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- Reinöhl, Uta & Nikolaus P. Himmelmann. 2011. Rezension von Christoph Schroeder, Gerd Hentschel & Winfried Boeder (eds.). 2008. Secondary predicates in Eastern European languages and beyond. *Linguistic Typology* 15(1). 131–139.
- Stephany, Ursula & Claudia Froitzheim. 2009. *Arbeitstechniken Sprachwissenschaft: Vorbereitung und Erstellung einer sprachwissenschaftlichen Arbeit* (UTB Sprachwissenschaft 3259). Paderborn: Fink.
- Walker, Janice R. & Todd Taylor. 1998. *The Columbia guide to online style*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Links

CHILDES	https://childes.talbank.org
Ethnologue	https://www.ethnologue.com/
Leipzig Glossing Rules	https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf
Leitfaden für gendersensible Sprache (in German)	https://gb.uni-koeln.de/e2106/e2113/e16894/20210623_Leitfaden_GGSprache_UzK_Webversion_ger.pdf
Office 365 für Studierende	https://bildung365.de
SIL International Fonts und Software	https://software.sil.org/products/
Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics	https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/style-sheet_0.pdf

World Atlas of Language Structures Online	https://wals.info/