LIN 491.1 (SS 05): About the final paper

Your final paper may be a data analysis or a research paper, 6-8 pages at maximum. It will count 20% of your course grade. Due Monday, 05/02/05. Submit your paper copy at the Dept. office by 5:00 pm or, preferably, e-mail it to <endo@msu.edu> as an MS Word file attachment by midnight.

Data Analysis
- Use actual conversation data, available for copying at the Dept. office (6th floor Wells Hall). Use as much data as you wish. Make it clear which data set and what line you are referring to.
- Make as many linguistically informed observations as possible, regarding the words, grammar, pragmatics, and/or discourse in the data. State why each item is interesting.
- Make comparisons with English and/or other languages as well, where possible.
- Divide your paper into coherent sections, number and label each section; e.g.
  1. Introduction; 2. Previous studies; 3. Data and Analysis; 4. Conclusion.
- Read “How to Write a Paper in Linguistics” below, and follow the specifications.

How to Write a Paper in Linguistics

1. Introduction
The objective of writing a research paper is to argue for your POSITION. Your paper may consist of a proposal of a new analysis, an application of new data to an established theory, and/or a critical review of past studies. Whatever claim you make, you must back it up with evidence.

   Be CLEAR, CONCISE, and COHERENT (3 C's!).

2. Content and format
Three important things in writing a paper (in any field) are: content, organization and form, in the descending order of importance.

2.1. Content
First of all, you have to have a POINT you want to make. Write your paper in such a way that the reader will be convinced that your analysis is better than others', or at least that you have an interesting point. Clearly distinguish your contributions from those of others’. When you quote others’ statements and ideas, you must cite the sources (with pages, where appropriate).

   Be prepared to revise your paper MANY times. You will have to keep deciding what is important enough to be included and what has to be cut. Do NOT write everything you thought about while writing the paper. Keep only what is relevant and important. Write always from the READER’S point of view. It will help if you try reading your paper a couple of hours later, next day, etc. When you read linguistics books and articles, pay attention to HOW it is written, as well as WHAT is written about. The way articles are written in Japanese/Korean Linguistics series is typical.

2.2. Organization
Before starting to write, make an outline of your paper; it will help you organize your thoughts. Present your arguments in the manner and order that are easiest for the READER to understand. Divide the content into coherent SECTIONS, and NUMBER and LABEL each section. Every paragraph should be relevant to the point you want to make in that section, and every section should be relevant to the overall point of the paper. In a long paper (e.g. 20+ pages), give a brief summary at the end of each section, as well as at the end of the paper. Remember: “Tell ’em what you’ll tell ’em -- tell ’em -- tell ’em what you’ve told ’em”!
2.3. Form
Word process neatly and follow the following specifications.

- Put page numbers throughout.
- Use double (or 1 1/2) space for the main part, and single space for examples, long quotes, footnotes, and references.
- Use 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman font (the font used in this document).
- Write the title and section headings in bold, and the rest in plain font.
- Put 1” margin all around.
- Put the paper title and your name at the top of the first page, not on a separate sheet.
- Number all the examples. Write a Japanese example in *romaji* (Hepburn system) in the first line, the English translation (gloss) for each word in the second line, and the translation of the whole sentence in single quotes in the third line. The conventions for long stretches of examples, as in discourse papers, may be different. Refer to published articles of a similar kind.
- Use footnotes, instead of endnotes, and keep them to an absolute minimum.
- Follow the CSLI style sheet for references and citations (see articles in *Japanese/Korean Linguistics*).

3. Sample format
3.1. Syntax paper
1. Introduction: Explain what your point is and why it is important/interesting, the theoretical framework adopted, and the organization of the paper. You will have to revise this section many times as you proceed.
2. Review of previous studies: Discuss major research on the topic and evaluate it. Point out their strengths and weaknesses, illustrating with examples and counterexamples. In a short paper (e.g. 10 pages), skip this section and incorporate your evaluation of previous studies in the main part.
3. Main part ✎ Put an appropriate title according to your topic; i.e. not ‘Main part’.
   First state your hypothesis with supporting data. Then justify it with additional evidence. Include apparent counterexamples and counterarguments, if any, and your rebuttal. Illustrate how your analysis is better than others. For example, it can predict the grammaticality of data more accurately than others, it can account for the data that others cannot, it can account for the same data more simply and elegantly than others. Remember: “descriptive accuracy”, “explanatory adequacy”, and “economy”.
4. Conclusion (and future directions): Summarize the strengths (and problems, if any) of your arguments. You may include the future directions of your research on the topic or suggestions for further research, in which case call the section as such.
Endnotes: (if footnotes are not used)
References

3.2. Paper on an empirical study: e.g. discourse analysis and SLA (second language acquisition)
1. Introduction: Include your hypotheses/research questions, in addition to what is listed above.
2. Review of previous studies: See above.
3. Data and method: Explain the data used, data collection methods, participants, etc.
4. Results and discussion (or Analysis)
5. Conclusion (and future directions): You may include theoretical and/or pedagogical implications, in addition to what is listed in #4 Conclusion in Section 3.1..
Endnotes: (if footnotes are not used)
References
Appendix: e.g. entire transcriptions, questionnaires used, statistics.