

I. Structure of the Thesis

- **Title**
- **Table of Contents**
numbering of chapters (1., 2., etc.) and subchapters (1.1, 1.2, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.)
 - a sub-level contains at least TWO sub-chapters, i.e. at least x.1 AND x.2
- **List of Abbreviations, Figures, Tables (if applicable)**
a list of abbreviations, figures and/or tables used in the paper, inserted after the table of contents
- **Acknowledgments**
this is usually part of a PhD dissertation and unusual for BA- and MEd.-papers

1. Introduction

- the reader needs to have a broad idea of what to expect of the paper
- possible starters are direct quotes, provoking statements, general/common knowledge (why is the topic interesting? why should the paper be read?); a connection should be drawn between beginning statement and area of research
- state the relevance of the topic (why should research on this topic be conducted? identify problems, gaps or desiderata which your study aims to solve)
- state the main (research) question/intention/focus of the paper
- explanation of the structure of the paper (if applicable: explain the reason why it is structured this way)

2. Theoretical background

- background knowledge the reader needs in order to understand the study; this usually refers to more than one concept
- all areas that are important for the interpretation and classification of your own results need to be mentioned, as this will serve as reference for the discussion of the empirical results of the study
- subchapters are used for different concepts or research areas; they should include:
 - definitions: what are the major terms/models/theories that the reader needs to know/be able to distinguish in order to understand your results?
 - what theory / area of research / approach does your study belong to? classify (if applicable, give a historical overview: has there been a major change or shift of focus?)
 - state of the art in this research area: what are the current knowledge, theories, approaches? what are major findings? what are opposing views or approaches, and conflicting findings? what are possible explanations put forth by different experts? what studies have been carried out that are relevant for your study? who are the major authors in this field?
 - instead of enumerating different studies, summarize them by classifying them into broader positions
- if necessary for the study, this part may include the theoretical consideration of a specific methodology
- the background can consist of several chapters; if you structure it that way, the numbering below will need to be adapted

3. Empirical study

- briefly introduce the focus of your study, which should be derived from or related to the focus of your theoretical background
- insert a transition, bridging the gap between theory and empirical study

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research question/s and hypotheses / expected outcomes

- introduce and state the question/s of your paper in logical order (some sub-questions might depend on the results of the main question and need to be formulated as such)
- questions need to
 - be clearly and unambiguously formulated
 - contain one focus at a time
 - be geared at the specific context and/or group
 - esp. in quantitative research: be falsifiable, i.e. stated in such a way that the construct in question can be operationalized (described with clear criteria) and such that counter-evidence can be found
- the number and scope of the questions need to match the scope of the paper
- if applicable (esp. in deductive, i.e. theory-driven research), state the hypotheses or expected outcomes of your study and explain or motivate them on the basis of your theoretical background

3.1.2 Methodological approach

- What methodological approach/es are you using? Why? describe the research design that you are using to answer the research question/s (e.g. qualitative or quantitative approach, longitudinal or cross-sectional study, field study, case study, classroom observation, (quasi-)experimental design, action research, etc.)
- describe the limitations of this approach (e.g. limitations of the focus of the design, of the type of data obtained, practical considerations, feasibility, etc.)

3.1.3 Subjects

- describe the subjects / informants of your study and give all information that is relevant to the interpretation of your study (e.g. age, sex, language background, etc.)
- describe the setting in which your subjects are encountered in the study, including all relevant information (e.g. school, classroom, family, university, etc.)
- make sure to anonymize all information on subjects and settings

3.1.4 Elicitation procedure

- describe the elicitation instruments used in your study (e.g. field notes, questionnaire, observation scheme, standardized test, interviews, etc.)
- in quantitative studies, briefly explain the quality criteria (objectivity, validity, reliability) pertaining to the instruments; in qualitative studies, briefly explain how to render your research trustworthy (see e.g. Golafshani 2003, Shenton 2004, summary of Lincoln & Guba's 1985 criteria: www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualval.php)
- describe exactly how, where, when and by whom the data were elicited / collected

3.1.5 Data analysis

- describe the steps you use to analyze the data you collected (e.g. quantitative analysis, statistical analysis, grounded theory, content analysis, etc.)
- describe the limitations of the analytical approach(es) you use

3.2 Research results

- in this section, the results of your data analysis are presented with reference to your research questions (and, if applicable, to your hypotheses)
- note that this section only refers to the presentation of the results; their interpretation will be part of the discussion (3.3)
 - you may display your results in form of charts, figures, or tables; these need to be numbered consecutively, differentiating between the form of display (i.e. Table 1, Table 2, Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.); extensive overviews of data can be displayed in an appendix and referred to in the text
 - describe the results verbally, referring to the figures, tables, etc.; structure them according to your research questions / hypotheses; avoid expressions such as ~~“seems to be”~~, ~~“appears to be”~~, ~~“could be”~~, ~~“the results show / prove”~~, as all of these express an analysis rather than a presentation

3.3 Discussion

- the discussion serves to interpret your results with regard to your questions, expectations and to the state of research presented in your theoretical background
 - when analyzing/interpreting the results, refer to your research questions (and hypotheses) and explain critically whether they corroborate/support or conflict with the findings of earlier studies (cf. in your theoretical background)
 - when results conform to your hypothesis, refer to your theoretical assumptions again, but mention alternative possible explanations, as well
 - with conflicting results, you can make careful assumptions as to why this might be the case, e.g. methodological reasons (be sure to give support for your argumentation and avoid statements of fact when interpreting)
 - show how your study contributes to and, if applicable, goes beyond the current state of research (the latter is required for PhD theses)
 - discuss the strengths and the weaknesses of your methodological approach, mentioning (and, if applicable, refuting) possible counter-arguments
 - discuss future theoretical and practical implications of your study

4. Conclusion

- in the conclusion, restate the main ideas of the study, summarize the most important findings including the study's limitations, possible implications and/or possibilities of future research
- do not include new information nor direct quotes in the conclusion

5. References

- all sources referred to in the text, but no more, need to be listed in the bibliography
- *Book Titles / Journal Titles are Capitalized and in Italics*; chapter titles / titles of journal articles **are not!**
- order alphabetically; several references of the same author begin with the earliest one; same year: a,b

Monography:

Legutke, M.K., Müller-Hartmann, A., Schocker-v. Ditfurth, M. (2010). *Teaching English in the Primary School*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Monography, further editions (e.g. 2nd):

Paradis, J., Genesee, F., Crago, M.B. (2011). *Dual Language Development & Disorders. A Handbook on Bilingualism & Second Language Learning* (2nd ed.). US, Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Edited volume:

Dittmar, N., Schlobinski, P. (eds.) (1988). *The Sociolinguistics of Urban Vernaculars* (Vol.1). Berlin: de Gruyter.

Chapter in edited volume:

Butler, Y.G., Haktua, K. (2004). Bilingualism and second language acquisition. In T.K. Bathia, W.C. Ritchie (eds.), *The Handbook of Bilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 114-144.

Shohamy, E. (1994). The role of language tests in the construction and validation of second language acquisition theories. In E.E. Tarone, S.M. Gass, A.D. Cohen (eds.), *Research Methodology in Second-Language Acquisition*. Hillsdale, New Jersey, Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum, 133-142.

Journal article:

Byers-Heinlein, K., Burns, T.C., Werker, J.F. (2010). The roots of bilingualism in newborns. *Psychological Science*, 21(3), 343-348.

6. Appendix

- include your data, test instruments, and all information of interest to the study and referred to in the thesis in your appendix; include a table of content for the appendix

II. Formal Requirements

1. Layout

- Scope: BA: ca. 15 pp., MA: ca. 40 pp., PhD: very generally ≥200 pp.
- Font: Times 12 (oder comparable font and size)
- Line spacing: 1,5
- Page margins: standard
- Page numbers
- Header: title of paper, author

2. Paragraph structure

- a paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are related to a single topic; each paragraph should contain one new point in your argument
- **NOTE: one sentence does not constitute a paragraph!**
- 1. topic sentence, 2. support sentences, 3. concluding sentence (optional)
- indent paragraphs or leave space between them (e.g. “Absatz 6p”), but do not use both (if using indentation, do NOT indent the first paragraph in chapter)

3. Sources and quotations

- ALL claims referred to in your paper, with the exception of your own analytical or critical argumentations, need to be supported by sources
 - (author year), (author & author year), more than two authors: (author et al. year)

Baker (2011) claims that negative effects of bilingualism can still be regarded as a very common prejudice. While the influence of two languages on cognition and language acquisition has been corroborated by a number of studies, the age of learning relevant for such effects is not yet well researched (Bialystok et al. 2014).
- direct quotations are used to support your argumentation and/or to show the exact wording of the author where necessary (e.g. for a definition or a specific expression)
 - do not use direct quotes if you can paraphrase

- **NOTE: a text composed of a collage of direct quotes is NOT ACCEPTABLE**
- (author/s year:page); following page: xf; several following pages: xff

The results provide evidence that infants at this age “are sensitive to the frequency distribution of speech sounds in the input” (Maye et al. 2002:108).

- authors quoted from other sources: quote author, year and page on which the secondary source is mentioned
- **NOTE: when taking notes from a text, *make sure that you indicate direct quotations in your excerpts right from the beginning!* (if you fail to do so, you will risk to insert quotations in your text without marking them, which will result in **PLAGIARISM**)**
- if you change parts of a quotation (e.g. leaving out parts of the quotation, adapting a capital letter to your text or highlighting parts of the quote), this needs to be indicated with square brackets; orthographical errors should be marked [sic]

[taken from Kersten & Rohde 2015:82]: (...) today “[c]ognitive research associates bilingualism with heightened mental flexibility and creative thinking skills, enhanced meta linguistic awareness, and greater communicative sensitivity” (Lazaruk 2007: 605).

- short quotations (less than 3 lines): integrated in text, inserted commas; quotations exceeding 3 lines of your text: block format, smaller font, no inverted commas

[taken from Kersten & Rohde 2015:82]: (...) for most children with learning disabilities, the benefits of immersion teaching seem to outweigh negative effects, so that it is indeed “difficult to argue in favor of whole program policies that would uniformly deny admission to any child” (Fortune 2011:266). (...)

[taken from Kersten & Rohde 2015:78]: (...) the greater the degree of bilingualism, the larger were the metalinguistic and cognitive effects observed (...).

Extending this pattern to education, it is reasonable to assume that there is a cumulative effect of learning language that, at least in the intense environment of immersion programs, confers some of the cognitive advantages on children even if they do not become highly fluent speakers. (Bialystok et al. 2009: 119)

4. Style

- below, there are a number of recommendations for the academic style of your paper
- technical terminology should be put in italics
- avoid reference to personal thoughts, feelings, actions (use general or passive constructions)
- maintain your chosen formal conventions throughout the whole paper
- include transitions between chapters and paragraphs
- use “data” with plural (e.g. “the data *were* elicited with the help of the BPVS”)
- numbers from one to twelve are written out in full (exception: presentation of results)
- NEVER use the term ~~“PROVE”~~ for empirical research studies: we are never able “prove” a hypothesis with the help of such studies; we can only *support* it, *corroborate* it, *provide evidence for* the hypothesis, etc.
- use “research” for “Forschung” (NOT ~~“researches”!~~), but study/studies for any particular kind of evidence
- ~~vocabularies~~ ⇒ words, lexical item/s, lexicon
- avoid clitics such as “it’s” or “don’t”
- use “question OF whether/how”

5. Researching academic sources

- in order to find **relevant sources** to your topic, you need to **conduct a search** with different **key words** and **combination of keywords** in relevant **databases**, e.g.:

- Scholar Google (<https://scholar.google.de>); careful: a very unspecific source!
- ERIC (<http://eric.ed.gov/>), a database containing sources in education science
- BLLDB (Bibliography of Linguistic Literature) (www.blldb-online.de)
- LLBA (Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts) ⇒ from uni-web: UB homepage ⇒ DBIS (Datenbank-Informationssystem of the UB) ⇒ “Schnelle Suche” ⇒ LLBA
- JSTOR (Journal Storage) ⇒ UB homepage ⇒ DBIS (Datenbank-Infosystem of the UB) ⇒ “Schnelle Suche” ⇒ JSTOR
- MLA International Bibliography ⇒ UB homepage ⇒ DBIS (Datenbank-Infosystem of the UB) ⇒ “Schnelle Suche” ⇒ MLA
- if there is no direct link to a pdf-download, you need to access the EZB (Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek) of the UB to see whether the UB provides this journal ⇒ if so, follow the link to download the article as pdf-file from the journal website
- if the UB does not provide access to it, use the *interlibrary loan service (Fernleihe)*

... and finally:

- take care of your time management from the very beginning
- start out with the general guiding question, an overview of the structure of your paper, and a selected bibliography for the different parts of the paper
- use a program such as Citavi to manage your references (including excerpts, keywords and notes)
- always save your work on various devices
- do not leave the printout to the final day of your deadline

keep in touch with your tutors regularly about all formal and content questions that arise

References

- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (5th ed.). Bristol et al.: Multilingual Matters.
- Bialystok, E., Peets, K.F., Moreno, S. (2014). Producing bilinguals through immersion education: Development of metalinguistic awareness. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 35, 177-191.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report* 8(4), 597-607, retrieved on Oct. 28, 2015 from: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf>
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- Maye, J., Werker, J.F., Gerken, L.A., (2002). Infant sensitivity to distributional information can affect phonetic discrimination. *Cognition* 82, B101–B111.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 10: Doing Research)
- Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* 22, 63-75.
- Sonntag, S. (2006). *Abschlussarbeiten und Dissertationen in der angewandten psychologischen Forschung*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.