

## HOW TO WRITE A PAPER IN RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES

(especially in the field of linguistics)

*These guidelines are an English translation and update of a version in Dutch, which I first created about thirty years ago when the internet barely existed for a wider audience. A more recent Dutch version, from 2012, is still available ([Hoe schrijf ik een werkstuk Slavische taalkunde](#)), but is now slightly outdated when it comes to searching for literature and other sources (see the updated Section 2 below).*

*Regarding the more technical details of these guidelines, I generally follow The Chicago Manual of Style, which is available online through the Leiden University library. Following this manual, I welcome the use of 'In-Text Citation' (see below, Section 9.2).*

*You might be tempted to use ChatGPT or other AI software-generated text or programming code when writing your paper, but using it is considered plagiarism according to the [Leiden University Code of Conduct on Plagiarism](#). Also, be aware that these generated texts can sell you meaningless generalisations or just plain crap.*

### **1 General: Content, form & style**

**1.1** The quality of a paper is primarily determined by its content. Nevertheless, the prerequisite must first be met: the presence of a structured, clear, factual, and accurate text. The text must be written in correct English (including consistent spelling and punctuation).

**1.2** A paper is almost always a record of what you have done. This definitely includes mentioning points that you have thought about but have not solved. After all, formulating an unsolved problem is also a contribution to science.

**1.3** The information contained in a paper should be such that fellow students should be able to understand what it is about. They should not have to read all kinds of books and articles before they understand what is actually meant. It is therefore often advisable to dedicate a separate chapter to discuss your research subject in a broader context. When writing, do not so much follow your own train of thought as that of the potential reader.

#### *Example*

Suppose you are doing a linguistic analysis of a thirteenth-century Old East Slavic charter. It is then advisable to first explain what other charters and other texts were around in the thirteenth century and earlier. Are there multiple copies of the charter in question or are we dealing with a unique copy? Does the language of the charter differ from that of other texts from the same period?

**1.4** Expect the reader to basically have no time to read the work. If the reader does not get a quick enough grasp of what the paper is about and what its objective is, chances

are s/he will drop out early. Therefore, pay special attention to the introductory chapter which should be seen as the business card of your work.

- 1.5 When discussing a publication, always proceed with care, discretion, and objectivity. Avoid insinuating and harsh language. Never use exclamation marks.
- 1.6 Avoid 'learned' and pompous language.
- 1.7 Avoid abbreviations of the type "a.o.", "e.g.", "i.e.", "viz." as much as possible.
- 1.8 Pay sufficient attention to a neat, but sober and functional design. Do not be tempted by the many gadgets on word processors.

## 2 Searching and processing literature and other sources

2.1 Searching for literature these days starts on the internet (usually Wikipedia). The same applies to 'scholarly' or 'academic' texts on the internet as to printed texts: they should always be approached critically. For information on the internet, assume it is incorrect unless the opposite can be proven by several other sources. After all, in most cases, there is no filter for information dumped on the internet.

2.2 When searching for literature on [Google Scholar](#), the first thing you should do is consult the section [Search Help](#).

2.3 For Russian internet sites, you can also just search with Google. It may be an option to use [Google.ru](#). On that site, switch the language from English to Russian, if necessary. This is because the ranking of search results varies from country to country and language to language. A second option is the Russian search engine [Яндекс](#) (also available in a [stripped-down version](#)).

2.4 Another way to start searching for literature is to type keywords into the electronic catalogues of the [Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden](#). While doing so, also make use of the database of the Modern Language Association (select the section Database Search > MLA International Bibliography). For corpus-based research on the Russian language, the online database [Национальный корпус русского языка](#) is indispensable.

2.5 It is important that during your research, you keep a list of titles of books and articles you have consulted and any notes you have made in the process. Leiden University provides a campus-wide subscription to [reference managers](#) such as EndNote, Mendeley or Zotero.

## 3 Structure of the paper

The typically regular components of a paper are:

- Cover/frontispiece:
  - title
  - name of the author and student number
  - track/programme/university
  - name(s) of the supervisor(s)
  - month and year of publication

- [optional:] Preface:
  - acknowledgements
  - motive and preparation of the paper
- Table of contents (as detailed as possible, including pagination)
- List of abbreviations
- Introduction:
  - research question (*a vital component of your paper*)
  - aim of the paper
  - selected method
  - structure of the paper
- Titles of chapters and smaller text units
- Conclusion (*including an explicit response to the research question*)
- Notes (if endnotes have been chosen)
- Bibliography
- [if applicable:] Appendix

Chapters (including Introduction and Conclusion) should be numbered. This also applies to smaller text units. You can use one of the following subdivisions: “1, 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.1.1” or “A, A.I, A.I.1, A.I.1.a”.

## 4 Citing

**4.1** Always enclose citations in double quotation marks: “ ”.

**4.2** Cite accurately in the original language. Any translations of quotations in a language not usually accessible to slavists are best given in a note. Usually inaccessible languages are, for example, Hungarian, Finnish, Romanian, Turkish or Arabic.

**4.3** Place short quotations simply in the running main text, but separate longer quotations by means of a whole or half a blank line below and above.

**4.4** Indicate omitted sections in a citation by three dots in square brackets: [...].

**4.5** Use square brackets in quotations also for your own comments, followed by a dash and your initials. Avoid adding the pedantic “sic”. Tacitly correct obvious spelling and printing errors that are unimportant to the argument (or enclose them in square brackets as well, but not followed by your initials).

### *Example*

You want to correct and add something in the following sentence: “In the course of archaeological excavations in medieval cities in northwestern European Russia, more than twelve hundred birchbarks with inscriptions have been found”. Then cite as follows: “In the course of archaeological excavations in medieval cities in northwestern European Russia [especially Novgorod – JS], more than twelve hundred birchbarks with insc[r]iptions have been found”.

## 5 Using example sentences

**5.1** When you give example sentences in your paper, do not enclose them in quotation marks, but separate them from the main text by means of a whole or half a blank

line at the bottom and top. If the example sentence refers to a specific word, you can italicise or underline it.

**5.2** If you have several example sentences, put numbers in front of them in brackets, which you can then refer to in the text. If you want to repeat an example sentence given earlier, it will keep the same number.

**5.3** If you have the example sentence from the literature, put the necessary bibliographical information behind it in brackets.

*Example*

The following sentences contain the particle *bylo*:

(1) Vanju s pervá *bylo* i ne zametil. (Turgenev)

(2) On sobralsja *bylo* vyzvat' taksi, no imenno v tu minutu ... (Kaverin)

If you now compare (1) and (2), you will notice that ...

## 6 Glossing

**6.1** Place words, whose form is under discussion in an argument, in italics. This also applies to smaller units than words, provided they are not marked phonologically (by / /) or phonetically (by [ ]).

**6.2** Place the translation (meaning) of the words mentioned in 6.1 in single quotation marks: ' '.

**6.3** Mark reconstructed (not attested) forms with an asterisk: \*.

**6.4** Mark deliberately constructed incorrect forms with two asterisks: \*\*.

*Examples*

- The reflex of Proto-Slavic \**tj* is *št* in Old Church Slavonic, such as in *svěšta* 'candle, light' (< \**svět-ja*).
- In accordance with the regular sound law, the loc.pl. of *ā*-stems should have been \*\*-*as* in Slavic, such as \*\**o ženás* 'about the women'.

## 7 Transliterating

**7.1** Transliterating Cyrillic is recommended for individual words or short quotations in the text and in the bibliography.

**7.2** Use only the international scientific system when transliterating the Cyrillic alphabet (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO\\_9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_9)).

*Note*

However, some proper names originally written in Cyrillic are transliterated in the way the person in question does or did, e.g., Н.С. Трубецкой = Trubetzkoj (rarely: Trubeckoj) or А.В. Исаченко = Issatschenko (but also: Isačenko).

## 8 Notes

**8.1** Place notes either at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the paper (endnotes), and before the bibliography.

**8.2** Try to avoid notes as much as possible. Use them only for important comments on side-paths in your paper. Simple bibliographical references do not belong in notes but in the main text (see below, Section 9.2).

## 9 Bibliographical references

**9.1** It is not possible to give a clear answer as to which information does and does not require a bibliographical reference. Generally speaking, assume that information presumed to be known among peers does not require a reference. The more specific the information, the sooner a reference is necessary.

### *Examples*

- No references for statements such as “Ukrainian is an East Slavic language” or “Russian no longer has the dual number”.
- Do provide a reference for more specific statements such as “There are different views on the number of cases in the Russian nominal declension (see Brecht and Levine 1985)” or “Verbal aspect is substantially different in Russian than in Czech (see Dickey 2000)”.

**9.2** When referring to literature, place the year of publication in brackets after the person or topic concerned *in the main text*. This is so-called ‘In-Text Citation’ or ‘Author-Date References’ according to Chapter 15 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. If several works by one author from a single year are cited, distinguish them by using lower-case letters after the year. If necessary, indicate the relevant page(s) of the publication after the year; the year and page(s) should be separated by a colon followed by a space.

### *Examples*

- “Trubetzkoy (1954) claims that ...”
- “According to Van der Meulen (1959a) ...”
- “In Lehfeldt (1984: 23) we read that ...”
- “Jakobson offers another explanation (1967b: 47-59, 68-74).”

## 10 Bibliography

**10.1** Arrange the bibliography alphabetically and multiple publications by one author chronologically. You do not need to pay attention to diacritical marks when alphabetising.

### *Example*

Cejtlin, Češko, Chaplin, Cibulka. Or: Šaxmatov, Šcedrin, Sluga

**10.2** Cite names in the mother tongue of the author concerned (but see the note to Section 7.2 above). If necessary, place the name as used in the publication between square brackets.

### *Example*

See below, Section 11: Uspenskij 1973.

**10.3** Titles of books or journals are italicised. Titles of articles are enclosed in double quotation marks.

### *Examples*

- *Books* – See below, Section 11: Comrie 1976; Kiparsky 1967; Machek 1968.
- *Articles* – See below, Section 11: Kieckers 1920; Klenin 1989.

**10.4** When referring to books, mention the place of publication (as written on the title page). It is not necessary – at least not for a paper – to mention the publisher. If a book is part of a series, place the name of this series and the relevant serial number in brackets after the title of the book.

*Examples*

See below, Section 11: Coulmas 1986; Ekblom 1951; Press 1986.

**10.5** When referring to articles, the relevant issue and pages should be given after the title of the journal. It is not necessary to state the place of publication or the publisher. If an article has been published in a collection of articles, conference proceedings, *festschrift* (often indicated by the German abbreviation “Fs.” = “Festschrift”) or commemorative volume (“Gs.” = “Gedenkschrift”), do mention the place of publication. In addition, indicate in brackets the names of the editor(s) (indicated by “ed(s).”). If the editorial board consists of more than three names, give only the first name followed by the abbreviation “et al.” (= Latin *et alia* ‘and others’).

*Examples*

- *Articles in journals* – See below, Section 11: Kieckers 1920; Klenin 1989.
- *Articles in other publication outlets* – See below, Section 11: Barentsen 2003; Jacobs and Jucker 1995; Zaliznjak 1986a, 1986b.

**10.6** Indicate untitled reviews with “Review” followed by the necessary bibliographical data.

*Example*

See below, Section 11: Machek 1954.

**10.7** Indicate references you have not consulted by placing “n.v.” (= Latin *non vidi* ‘not seen’) after it.

*Example*

See below, Section 11: Ickler 1977.

**10.8** When referring to internet resources, always include the full address (including *http://* or *https://*). Also include the date you accessed the internet source. This is essential because of the ephemeral nature of the internet.

*Example*

See below, Section 11: Safronov 2023.

**10.9** A complication when referring to internet resources is that some addresses can be very long or the address in the address line may not reflect the exact page. Also, some websites work with temporary addresses, for example if you are searching in databases, so the link may not work even a few hours later. In such cases, you can alternatively give the address of the main page and then describe how to get to the page in question.

*Example*

You can refer to the search result for the word *пировать* in the [Национальный корпус русского языка](#) as follows: “НКРЯ, [www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru) > Основной > ‘пировать’ (1 May 2024)”.

## 11 Example of a bibliography

- Barentsen, Adrian. 2003. "O pobuditel'nyx konstrukcijax s ispolnitelem 1-go lica". In: Jos Schaecken, Peter Houtzagers, Janneke Kalsbeek (eds.), *Dutch Contributions to the Thirteenth International Congress of Slavists, Ljubljana: Linguistics* (Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics 30), 1-33. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Coulmas, Florian (ed.). 1986. *Direct and Indirect Speech* (Trends in Linguistics 31). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ekblom, Richard. 1951. *Die frühe dorsale Palatalisierung im Slavischen* (Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala 39/2). Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, and Wiesbaden-Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Ickler, Nancy. 1977. "Topicalization and relativization in Old Russian". In: Kenneth Whistler et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 656-669. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society. (n.v.)
- Jacobs, Andreas, and Andreas H. Jucker. 1995. "The historical perspective in pragmatics". In: Andreas H. Jucker (ed.), *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English* (Pragmatics and Beyond, New Series 35), 3-33. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kieckers, E. 1920. "Zum 'pleonastischen' inquit". *Glotta* 10, 200-209.
- Kiparsky, Valentin. 1967. *Russische historische Grammatik. II: Die Entwicklung des Formensystems*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Klenin, E. 1989. "On preposition repetition: a study in the history of syntactic government in Old Russian". *Russian Linguistics* 13, 185-206.
- Machek, Václav. 1954. Review of Ekblom 1951. *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 22, 223-226.
- Machek, Václav. 1968. *Etymologický slovník jazyka českého*. 2nd ed. Praha: Academia.
- Press, J. Ian. 1986. *Aspects of the Phonology of the Slavonic Languages. The Vowel y and the Consonantal Correlation of Palatalization* (Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics 7). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Safronov, Peter. 2023. "Change Russia, start with constitutional thinking". *Raam op Rusland, Oekraïne, Belarus*, 4 December 2023, <https://platformraam.nl/dossiers/kremlin/2507-change-russia-start-with-constitutional-thinking>. (2 May 2024.)
- SRJa XI-XVII. 1975-. *Slovar' russkogo jazyka XI-XVII vv.* R.I. Avanesov et al. (eds.). Moskva: Nauka.
- Uspenskij [Uspensky], B.A. 1973. *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*. Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig (trans.). Berkeley: University of California.
- Zaliznjak, A.A. 1986a. "Novgorodskie berestjanye gramoty s lingvističeskoj točki zrenija". In: V.L. Janin and A.A. Zaliznjak (eds.), *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste: Iz raskopok 1977-1983 gg.*, 89-219. Moskva: Nauka.
- Zaliznjak, A.A. 1986b. "Slovoukazatel' k berestjanym gramotam". In: V.L. Janin and A.A. Zaliznjak (eds.), *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste: Iz raskopok 1977-1983 gg.*, 260-306. Moskva: Nauka.