

**NGUYEN TAT THANH UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**HANDBOOK
IN
MASTER PROJECT WRITING**

Ho Chi Minh City, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Every English Linguistics Master's student at Nguyen Tat Thanh University has to complete a research project as part of the requirements for his/her Master degree.

A project is a research into an issue related to English Linguistics, such as English language teaching and/or learning, English training curriculum development, translation of documents from English into Vietnamese and/or vice versa, the interrelations between language and culture and between language and literature.

A project includes the following academic expectations:

- Mastery of an appropriate set of academic material,
- Understanding of research design and successful application of research steps in conducting a study,
- Ability to demonstrate critical thinking about an English-related problem and the application of appropriate analytical techniques in solving the problem,
- Experience in writing a scientific paper and giving an oral presentation on the process and results of the research.

Generally, the student is encouraged to choose his/her own topic. However, if he/she cannot make the decision by himself/herself, then he/she can be assigned a topic to write about or asked to choose among several topics.

Before embarking on his/her project, the student is required to submit his/her project proposal for the Academic Board's approval.

After the proposal is approved and the decision on project-topic and supervisor assignment is signed, the student can start working on his/her project. The project is expected to be undertaken within 16 – 24 weeks in semester 5 of the training program. On completion of the project, the student submits the written project for the Academic Board's evaluation. The project that is marked at least 5.5 points by the Board is considered "pass" and the student is considered to successfully complete the program and qualified enough to be granted the Master Degree in English Linguistics.

Part 1: MASTER'S PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Master's project proposal is a well-organized scientific description of the Master's project which seeks to address key questions surrounding a major project. It concisely describes what the project hopes to accomplish, why those objectives are important, and how the researcher intends to achieve them.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS TO FOLLOW

The Master's project proposal must be completed during the fourth semester of the training program. Below is the proposal approval procedure:

Firstly, the student submits his/her proposal in the written form which is signed by his/her supervisor.

Secondly, the student gives an oral presentation on his/her proposal for the Academic Board's comments and feedback.

Thirdly, the student revises his/her proposal as recommended by the Board (if any) and submits the revised version of the proposal.

Finally, the decision on project-topic and supervisor assignment is signed and the student starts working on his/her project under the supervision of his/her assigned supervisor.

II. PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

A Master's project proposal is between 5- and 10-A4 pages long. It should include the following elements:

- *The student's full name*
- *The institution's name*
- *The project title*: The project title should be brief and can clearly reflect the contents of the project.
- *Major – Major code*
- *Introduction*: This section specifies why the author is interested in the topic, why he/she thinks the research is significant and what he/she intends to study.

- *Literature review*: This section is divided into two sub-sections namely (1) Theoretical framework which focusses on the main issues related to the research topic, and (2) Review of previous related studies which emphasizes the empirical studies previously conducted and specifies the gap which this research aims to fill.
- *Research objective*: This section describes what the research aims to achieve and lists the main research questions the researcher wishes to seek the answers to.
- *Methodology*: This section (1) describes the research design and the data collection methods to be used and explains why they are selected; (2) specifies the research population, research sample, sampling techniques with brief explanation for his/her choice.
- *Outcomes*: This section specifies the intended research outcomes – what the author aims to achieve with his/her research.
- *Time plan*: This section gives a detailed time plan which shows what work needs to be done and when the work will be completed.
- *References*: This section lists the key articles and texts from which the author gets information.

Part 2: MASTER'S PROJECT

I. PROJECT STRUCTURE

Excluding the Preliminary section, a Master Project consists of five distinct chapters, namely (1) Chapter 1: Introduction, (2) Chapter 2: Literature Review, (3) Chapter 3: Methodology, (4) Chapter 4: Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data, and (5) Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations. Each of the five chapters has its own focus and objective.

PRELIMINARY SECTION

Basically, the Preliminary section of a project may consist of any or all of the following elements which appear in the order: Title page, Abstract, Acknowledgement, Table of contents, List of abbreviations (if any), List of tables (if any), List of figures (if any).

All the Preliminaries of the project are given lower case Roman numerals at the top center of the page. Heading level 1 format is used for the topical headings of the Preliminaries. All topical headings are single-spaced, capitalized and centered on the page.

COVER PAGE

Cover page is the first page including the following information: the institution's name and logo, the project title, the author's full name, the submission statement, the submission date.

The title of the project should be brief, concise, descriptive and comprehensive. It should be capitalized, single spaced and centered between the right and left margins of the page.

All other entries in the Title page, follow the format and typing directions shown in *Appendix 1*.

DECLARATION BY THE AUTHOR

In *Declaration by the author*, the researcher confirms that the project submitted is his/her own work and it has not been submitted anywhere for other purposes.

See *Appendix 2* for the sample of *Declaration by the author*.

ABSTRACT

Abstract is the brief descriptive summary of the project. It includes a statement of the problem or issue, a brief description of the research methods and design, major findings and their importance, the conclusions arrived and the recommendations. The abstract should not be longer than 350 words.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This page includes expression of gratitude and appreciation to the assistance, guidance and direction received by the writer from institutions and/or individuals in the conduct of the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents shows the major divisions of the report, the preliminary section, the text or main body and the reference section with their respective numbers, titles, chapter and references.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

List of abbreviations shows all the abbreviations used in the project, with items presented in alphabetical order.

LIST OF TABLES

List of tables provides the following information: (1) the table number, (2) the full title of each table and (3) the corresponding page number of each table. The table number, full title and page number should exactly be as they appear in the text. Tables should be numbered correspondingly in Arabic numerals throughout the page.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures are statistical data presented in graphical form. They include graphs, charts, drawings, diagrams, maps, photographs, blueprintings, computer print outs, etc. A separate page is made for the list of figures proceeding right after the list of tables. The full titles of figures would be exactly as they appear in the text, and presented with corresponding number in Arabic form with corresponding page location.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction is the opening chapter of the report which emphasizes the need for research not only to solve problems and difficulties but also to expand the frontier of knowledge and to improve the quality of social life. This chapter includes the following elements:

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Background of a study is the first section of the paper that establishes the context underlying the research with a general overview of the field or topic. In other words, this section explains why this particular research topic is important and essential to the understanding of the main aspects of the study. It contains the key problem stated, the need for conducting the study and summary of what the study aims to achieve.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives are desired or expected ends to be achieved through the research activity that are not influenced by the judgement or personal bias. They describe the aims or goals expected to be achieved at the end of the research process.

Good objectives of the study have an acronym of S-M-A-R-T-E-R that will be useful in remembering as follows:

1. S: They should be stated in simple language;
2. M: They are measurable concepts;
3. A: They are attainable;
4. R: They are result-oriented;
5. T: They are time-bounded;
6. E: They generate enthusiasm;
7. T: They make use of the local resources.

The objectives of the study can be stated with “*The aim/purpose of this paper is to ...*”, “*This paper aims to/at ...*”, “*This paper is meant/intended to ...*”.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section includes the specific questions to be answered in the project body or in *Chapter 4*. These questions will also be the basis for the research, related studies and literature, methodology, etc.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 consists of three main elements, including (1) Definition of terms, (2) Theoretical framework, and (3) Review of previous related studies.

2.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

There may be a number of terms used in the paper that are subject to a variety of interpretations. The definition of terms provides unambiguous meaning to terms that otherwise can be interpreted in different ways. Definitions should have authoritative basis (taken from books, etc.), thus sources must be properly cited. Definition of terms may be followed by examples or further information about the terms.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework provides readers with an overview of current knowledge, allowing the author to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research that he/she can later apply to his/her paper. Usually, three areas that are related to the problem will be covered in this section and between three and four articles need to be located and synthesized for each of the three areas. Local and foreign authors are required to be consulted, and cited.

2.3. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES

Basically, this section is to inform readers of the critical studies related to the topic that have been conducted. It also provides the justification for the study as the writer indicates the gaps and weaknesses in the existing research. The review of related studies, therefore, provides credibility to the study as it shows that the study was developed due to a need to conduct it. Abstracts of the papers read by the writer as a proponent should be included in this section.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 reflects the procedures and processes undertaken by the researcher to finish the study. It shows how the researcher answered the research questions stated in *Chapter 1*.

This chapter consists of the following elements:

3.1. RESEARCH METHOD USED

This section specifies and describes what research method is used to conduct the study and justifies why the method is selected.

3.2. RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.2.1. Research population

Research population is a well-defined collection of individuals or objects that have similar characteristics. The research population must be qualified to respond on the basis of two criteria. Firstly, they must possess the information. Secondly, they need to have certain attributes to make the responses meaningful.

This section specifies who the population is, what the common binding characteristics of its members are and how big the population is.

3.2.2. Research sample

Sample is a subset of the population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it is drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. That means the sample must be large enough to meet needs of the research but not too many to entail much cost. This section describes how big the sample is and explains why this number is chosen.

3.2.3. Sampling technique

The purpose of sampling is to take a small portion of the population to represent the whole population. A sample must be selected properly or the research may introduce bias error in the result.

This section describes how the sample is selected from the population and explains why the sample is chosen that way.

3.3. RESEARCH LOCALE

This section describes the place where the study is conducted.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE

3.4.1. Data collection method

This section specifies what data collection method and what research instruments are used and for what purposes they are meant. It also describes how many parts each instrument has and what information each part is intended to get.

3.4.2. Data collection procedure

This section narrates how the instruments are delivered to the respondents and how the responses are sent to the researcher.

3.5. STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

All the statistical treatments used in the study must be specified in this section. For manually computed statistical treatment, it is necessary to specify the formulae used for computations. For data to be computed using computer software, the coding scheme for the data input is also included to facilitate understanding of text.

Chapter 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Presentation of data is the process of organizing data into logical, sequential and meaningful categories and classifications to make them amenable to study and interpretation.

Data can be presented in tabular or graphical forms followed by texts describing key data in the tables or graphs.

- *Tables* are a systematic arrangement of related ideas in which classes of numerical facts or data are given each row and their subclasses are given each column in order to present the relationships of the sets of numerical facts or data in a definite, compact and understandable form.
- *Graphs* are a chart representing the quantitative variations or changes of variables in pictorial or diagrammatic form.

- *Texts* are statements with numerals or numbers that serve to supplement or expand the contents of tables or graphs, rather than duplicate them.

Analysis of data is the process of breaking up the whole study into its constituent parts of categories according to the specific questions under the statement of the problem. The analysis of the data should be objective and logical.

Interpretation of data answers the question “so what?” in relation to the results of the study. What do the results of the study mean? This section is the most critical aspect of the project report. In this section, the writer examines, summarizes, interprets and justifies the results, then draws inferences. In analyzing and interpreting data, the researcher should point out those that are consistent or inconsistent with the theory presented in the study’s theoretical framework. The findings are compared and contrasted with that of other previous studies and interpretations are made thereof.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary, conclusion and recommendations is the last part of the research work.

5.1. SUMMARY

This section identifies the main elements of the report while excluding any background knowledge or optional information. A summary of findings reveals and summarizes the most critical factors and outcomes of a study, telling readers what has been done, how it has been done, and what the study results are.

5.2. CONCLUSION

Conclusion is a synthesis of critical elements, not just a description of the points or a re-statement of the problem statement. Concluding statements can also aid in refocusing readers’ attention on the quality statements and verifiable details of the research. Conclusions can also form a foundation for further research. Writing a conclusion includes:

1. Restating the research topic.
2. Reiterating the objective of the study.
3. Making a summary of the main points.

4. Mentioning the relevance or outcomes.
5. Wrapping up the writer's thoughts.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations should be premised on the conclusions of the study.

REFERENCES

Any ideas or facts taken from an outside source, whether that source is published on paper, presented in a lecture or broadcast, or made available online, must be cited both in the project body and in the *References* in order to inform where the information comes from. The references, therefore, consist of a list of all the books, articles, journals, etc. used in the project. Sufficient information including author, date, name of publication, etc. should be provided to allow readers to find the source. The entries in the reference list are usually arranged in alphabetical order by the last name of the first author listed on the source.

For more detailed instructions on citation and referencing, refer to the *Guide to referencing and citing* provided by the Faculty of Foreign Languages, NTTU.

APPENDICES

Appendices contain information which is peripheral to the main body of the report. The Appendices can consist of raw data, interview questions, sample questionnaires or any other material which would break up the theme of the text if it appeared in the project body.

II. PROJECT FORMAT

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A project must be concise, clear, straightforward, well-laid out and consistently formatted. It must be written in accordance with the following requirements:

- *Length*: At least 50-A4 pages, excluding Preliminary and Appendices sections.
- *Font*: Times New Roman

CHAPTER HEADINGS

- Heading level 1 (uppercase letter, font size 14, boldface, center alignment)
- *Line spacing*: 1.5; before 0; after 24

SECTION HEADINGS

- Heading level 2 (uppercase letter, font size 13, boldface, left alignment)
- Indicated by 2 numbers separated by a dot, the first refers to the chapter number, the second refers to the section number.
- *Line spacing*: 1.5; before 0, after 12

SUBSECTION HEADINGS

- Heading level 3 (lowercase letter, font size 13, boldface, left alignment)
- Indicated by 3 numbers separated by dots, the first refers to the chapter number, the second refers to the section number and the last refers to the sub-section number.
- *Line spacing*: 1.5; before 0; after 6

SUB-SUBSECTION HEADINGS

- Heading level 4 (lowercase letter, font size 13, boldface, italics, left alignment)
- Indicated by 4 numbers separated by dots, the first refers to the chapter number, the second refers to the section number, the third refers to the sub-section number and the last refers to the sub-subsection number.
- *Line spacing*: 1.5; before 0; after 6

TEXT UNDER SECTIONS/SUBSECTIONS/SUB-SUB-SECTIONS

- *Alignment*: Justified
- *Font size*: 13
- *Line spacing*: 1.5; before 0; after 6

MARGINS AND PAGE NUMBERS

- *Margins*: 3cm top, 3cm bottom, 3cm left, 2cm right
- *Page number*:

- Page numbers are placed at the top center of the page.
- *Cover pages* are not numbered.
- Lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, ...) are displayed on Preliminaries.
- Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, ...) are displayed from Chapter 1 onwards.
- Chapters are separated by using *Page break*.

TABLES AND FIGURES

- Tables are indicated with the word *Table* written in italics, followed by 2 numbers (the first refers to the chapter number and the second refers to the table number in the chapter, then followed by a colon (:), and the table caption written in boldface lowercase letters. Table captions are left-aligned and placed just above table.
- Figures are also indicated with the word *Figure* written in italics, followed by 2 numbers (the first refers to the chapter number and the second refers to the figure number in the chapter, then followed by a colon (:), and the figure caption written in boldface lowercase letters. Figures captions are centrally-aligned and placed just below table.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations should not be overused, i.e. only abbreviate terms or phrases that are regularly repeated in the report. These terms or phrases should be typed in full form the first time they appear in the text with their abbreviated form in brackets. Then the abbreviations are used from there on.

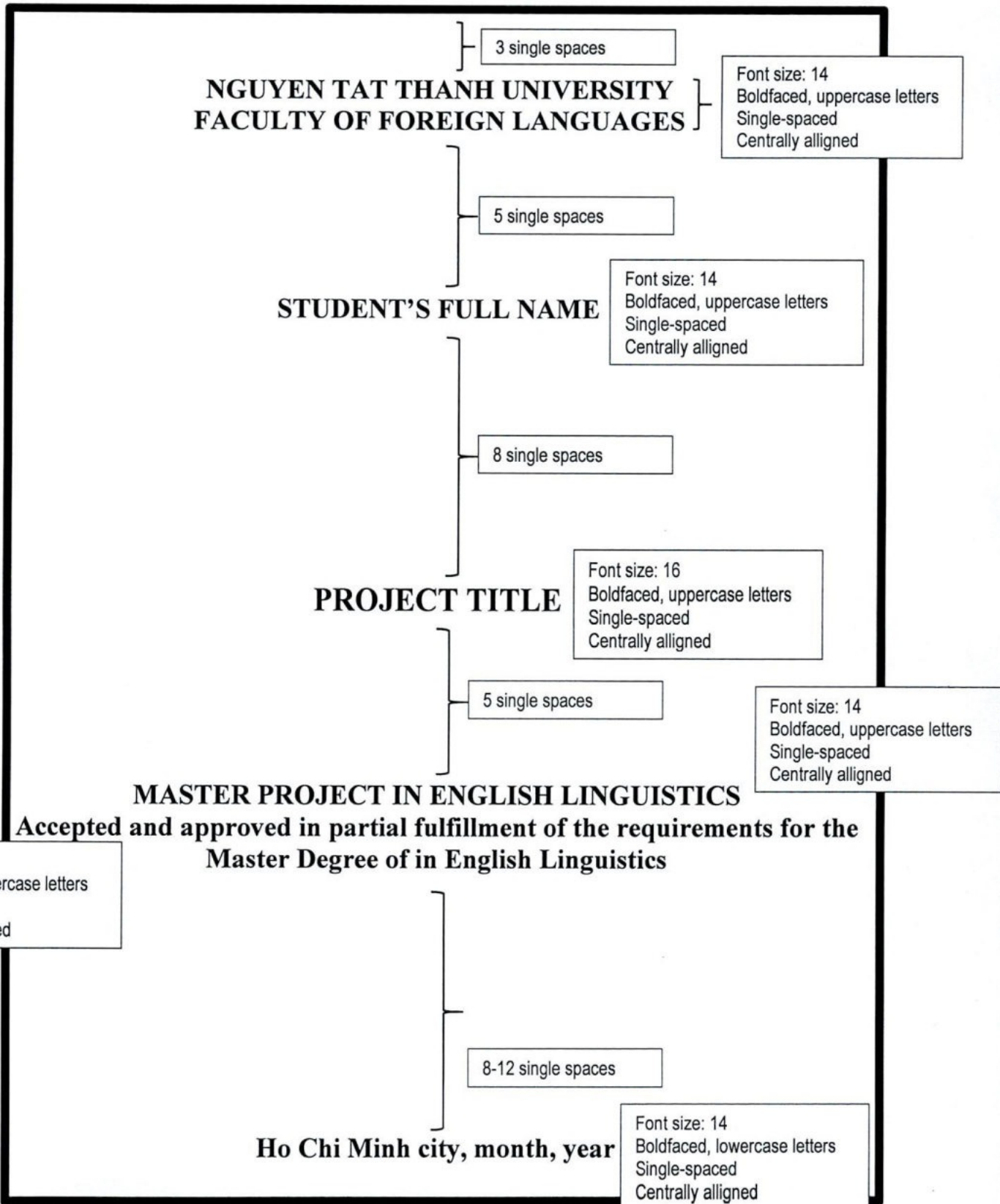
If there are many abbreviations used in the text, there must be List of abbreviations in the Preliminary section (after the Table of contents).

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



TS. Nguyễn Thị Nguyệt Ánh

Appendix 1: Title page



Appendix 1: Declaration by the author

DECLARATION BY THE AUTHOR

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this submission is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit / grade. I understand the ethical implications of my research, and this work meets the requirements of the Faculty and Institution.

Student Name:

Student Number:

Signed

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