

Universität Vechta  
Fakultät II  
Fach Anglistik,  
Anglistische Sprachwissenschaft

## **Informed Consent Form – Einverständniserklärung**

**Project Title:** Syntactic Complexity of Students' Academic Writing

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Teresa Pham, Research Assistant (Wiss. Mitarbeiterin)

Please read the following informed consent carefully before continuing. If you have any questions or comments about the study, please email [Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de](mailto:Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de)

### Introduction / Purpose of the study:

You are being asked to participate in an empirical study about the linguistic characteristics of academic texts produced by students at the University of Vechta. More precisely, I am interested in finding out whether students' (written) texts in English resemble general Academic English, especially with regard to the characteristics of phrases (esp. noun phrases). If that is the case, I also hope to find out at what point during their studies students' texts in English start to resemble Academic English (e.g. with the stay abroad or with the BA-thesis). Finally, I am also interested in the influence of students' L1 and characteristics of German as an Academic Language. The information gathered from this study will increase our understanding of the characteristics of L2 Academic English and more generally Academic Language and might also provide helpful information for improving the structure of our study programme.

The purpose of this study is NOT to identify mistakes, nor to evaluate the correctness of your language use!

### Procedure:

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to provide me with several English and German texts which you have written for seminars or as official assignments (e.g. seminar papers or BA- or MA-theses). Furthermore, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire relating to your personal contact with English and Academic English. The questionnaire itself will take approximately 5-10 minutes and is also available as an online survey (<https://survey.academiccloud.de/index.php/575738?lang=en>).

### Confidentiality:

Data collection is anonymous, i.e. should your texts contain personal data like your name, your student registration number, or your address, these will be deleted when your texts become part of the *Vechta Corpus of English Academic Writing (Vec-CEAW)*. There is no need for you to get active. The questionnaire will not collect personal data.

Please note that participation in this study will not result in any consequences, neither positive nor negative, for your studies.

This study has been authorized by the data protection official of the University of Vechta and the ethics committee of the University of Vechta.

Participants' Statement:

- The purpose and the procedure of this study was explained to me and I understand my involvement.
- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time, I no longer wish to partake in the study, I can notify the researcher for my contribution (text(s) and questionnaire) to be withdrawn instantly.
- I consent for my contribution (text(s) and questionnaire) to be included in the study.
- I understand that information will be treated anonymously and in accordance with the provision of the European General Data Protection Regulation (2018, Art. 4).
- I understand that, after anonymization, my contribution (text(s) and questionnaire) may be made available to other co-investigators (possibly students of the University of Vechta) for analysis, but that these will be sworn to secrecy.
- I understand that, after anonymization, my contribution (text(s) and questionnaire) may be shown to other people, since material or results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publication, or presentations at conferences or scientific meetings.
- I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form on request.
- I declare that I am happy to participate in this study.

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DATE

SIGNATURE

## Questionnaire

Please read and answer the following questions. If you have any questions or comments about the study, please email [Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de](mailto:Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de)

Feel free to skip a question if you do not want to give this information.

### Language profile

1. In which year were you born? (e.g. 2004)

2. Which subjects do you study? (e.g. *English / German*)

3. What is your study programme?

BA Combined Studies (BACS), English as 'A-Fach'

BA Combined Studies (BACS), English as 'B-Fach'

Master of Education

Other:

4. When did you start to study English? (e.g. *Winter term 2021/22*)

5. What is your first language (L1)? (If you have several first languages, please indicate all of them.)

6. Which language(s) do you speak as foreign or second language(s) (L2)?

7. For each of the above-mentioned foreign languages, please specify whether you are a beginning (B), intermediate (I), or advanced speaker (A).

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8. How many years before started to study English did you start learning English? (e.g. 13 years, if you have started learning English in first grade and have passed your A-levels/*Abitur* after 13 years.)

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9. Was any of your school education in English?

- Yes.
- No.

10. Have you lived in an English-speaking country?

- Yes.
- No.

If you have answered yes, please also answer the following questions:

a. In which English-speaking country have you lived and for how long?

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b. Was this stay part of your studies, i.e. was this your stay abroad?

- Yes.
- No.

c. In this English-speaking country, did you study at a university?

- Yes.
- No.

11. How often do you read or 'consume' the following types of texts (on average)?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less Often	Never
English Content on Social Media Platforms					
English Series or Movies					
English Novels or Literature					
English Newspaper Articles					
Scientific Publications in English					
Scientific Publications in German					

12. For which module(s) during your studies have you had to read scientific or academic publications?

**Self-assessment**

13. What do you think are your strong points in academic writing? You can take into account previous courses, feedback that you have received, things that you like about writing.

14. What are areas that you feel uncertain about in academic writing? You can take into account previous courses, feedback that you have received, things that you

15. How confident do you feel about the following aspects of academic writing?

	5 (Very confident)	4	3	2	1 (Very unconfident)
Grammar					
Punctuation					
Vocabulary					
Spelling					
Overall Structure					
Coherence					
Academic Style					
Quoting and Referencing					

## Submission of text(s)

Now you are asked to make available **English texts** which you have written during your studies and submitted for seminars or as official assignments (e.g. seminar papers or BA- or MA-theses). These texts can be **typewritten or handwritten**, i.e. you could also take a photograph of a handwritten assignment.

Please try to make available the text in its **entirety** (i.e. including the bibliography) and in their **original form**.

Research on Second Language Acquisition suggests that a speaker's L1 (first language) may influence the acquisition of their L2 (second language). Therefore, it would be great if you could also make available (at least) **one German text** for comparison which you have written during your studies and submitted for seminars or as official assignments.

Please send these texts to my e-mail address ([Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de](mailto:Teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de)) or make them available via GigaMove, Dropbox, the Academic Cloud, or the like.

For each of the texts, please provide the following information:

### English Text 1:

16. Was this text marked?

Yes.

No.

17. For which discipline did you write this text?

English Linguistics

English Literary Studies

English Didactics

Practical Language Teaching of English and Cultural Studies

Other:

18. At which point in your studies did you write this text? (e.g. module anb007, module anb005, BA-thesis, MEd-thesis)

19. In which term did you write this text?

20. Did you use resources like Google Translate, DeepL, or ChatGPT when writing this text?

Yes.

No.

I cannot remember.

English Text 2:

21. Was this text marked?

Yes.

No.

22. For which discipline did you write this text?

English Linguistics

English Literary Studies

English Didactics

Practical Language Teaching of English and Cultural Studies

Other:

23. At which point in your studies did you write this text? (e.g. module anb007, module anb005, BA-thesis, MEd-thesis)

24. In which term did you write this text?

25. Did you use resources like Google Translate, DeepL, or ChatGPT when writing this text?

Yes.

No.

I cannot remember.

English Text 3:

26. Was this text marked?

Yes.

No.

27. For which discipline did you write this text?

English Linguistics

English Literary Studies

English Didactics

Practical Language Teaching of English and Cultural Studies

Other:

28. At which point in your studies did you write this text? (e.g. module anb007, module anb005, BA-thesis, MEd-thesis)

29. In which term did you write this text?

30. Did you use resources like Google Translate, DeepL, or ChatGPT when writing this text?

Yes.

No.

I cannot remember.

German Text 1:

31. Was this text marked?

Yes.

No.

32. For which discipline did you write this text?

English Linguistics

English Literary Studies

English Didactics

Practical Language Teaching of English and Cultural Studies

Other:

33. At which point in your studies did you write this text? (e.g. module anb007, module anb005, BA-thesis, MEd-thesis)

34. In which term did you write this text?

35. Did you use resources like Google Translate, DeepL, or ChatGPT when writing this text?

Yes.

No.

I cannot remember.

If you would like to submit more English or German texts than was previously possible, please complete this last part of the pdf-questionnaire (p. 4 onwards) a second time or contact me via e-mail ([teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de](mailto:teresa.pham@uni-vechta.de)).