

Final B.A. oral

overview

1 Topics

- You will choose two unrelated topics for your oral examination. Talk to your potential examiner about what counts as unrelated as early as possible.
- The topics have to be confirmed by your first examiner before you register for the examination with the *Prüfungsamt*. A non-exhaustive list of topics I accepted in the past:
 - Acoustic phonetics
 - North American accents
 - Morphology
 - Word-formation
 - The mental lexicon
 - Sociolinguistics
 - Historical linguistics
 - Language change
 - First language acquisition
 - Second language acquisition
 - Bi-/Multilingualism
 - Sign language

Further topics can be arranged. Get in touch to discuss your suggestions.

- There must be no overlap between the topics of your oral and the topic of your B.A. dissertation.
- The first examiner in your oral may not be the supervisor of your B.A. dissertation, and vice versa.

2 Reading list

- For each topic you will have to select a monograph, often a book-length introduction to the topic (cf. section 1) in question. The general concepts, ideas, methods, and controversies addressed in this book will be used as the basis for a large part of the discussion. Note: General introductions to linguistics as a whole are not suitable for this purpose.

- For each topic you will have to select an article published in a scientific journal (cf. section 4) or a book chapter from an edited volume. This article/chapter must be a piece of original, empirical research, and it defines an area of specialisation inside your more general topic. I will expect you to have understood the precise goal, methodology, main results, and relevance for the discipline of the study reported on. Most suitable texts will be roughly 15–30 pages long and reasonably recent (published ≤ 10 years ago). Somewhat shorter/longer/older texts might also be accepted on a case-by-case basis.
- Please hand in copies of your two research articles/book chapters (preferably as a PDF), or send links to the texts.
- *Your reading list must be okayed by me no later than 4 weeks before your examination (earlier is better).*

3 Procedure

- You will first be asked whether you are healthy and generally able to proceed with the examination. If you answer this question in the negative, the examination will be re-scheduled once you have handed in a medical certificate.
- The examination takes 30 minutes and is worth 6 CP. Half an hour is not a lot of time, so questions often focus on fundamental concepts and problems, rather than highly specialised issues.
- Each topic will be discussed for about 15 minutes, and you will be given the choice of which topic to start with.
- A second examiner will be present and take the minutes. During the examination itself, they are normally a passive observer (i.e. they do not ask any questions), but they will determine your final grade together with me.
- Try to make your immediate answers clear and concise. Once you have provided a direct answer to the question, you can (and should!) elaborate, e.g. by showing connections to other concepts or problems. *Within certain limits* it is usually a good thing if you talk more than your examiner – don't talk for the sake of talking, though!
- You will be expected to know and correctly use specialised linguistic terminology whenever possible.
- You should be prepared to deal with one or two simple datasets (tables or graphs), which can be taken from your background reading, another source, or just made up specifically for the examination.

4 Linguistic journals

This is a selection (!) of well-known journals dealing with (English) Linguistics. They vary in which sub-area(s) of the discipline they cover. Order of presentation is not supposed to be indicative of any sort of prioritisation on my part. Click the names to get to the journals' websites.

- *English Today*
- *English Language & Linguistics*
- *English World-Wide*
- *Language*
- *Language Variation and Change*
- *Journal of Sociolinguistics*
- *Journal of Phonetics*
- *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*
- *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*
- *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*