

List of Subject Areas for the *BA/BEd-Arbeit* and *MA/MEd-Arbeit*

The following list of subject areas for the *BA/BEd-Arbeit* and *MA/MEd-Arbeit* covered by members of staff at the English Department is provided to help students locate a suitable supervisor (*Betreuer*) for their own potential fields of interest. It is not, however an exclusive list: students are welcome to consult potential supervisors with ideas for topics of their own interest.

Formal procedure for registering and submitting the *BA/BEd-Arbeit* and *MA/MEd-Arbeit*:

<https://www.uni-trier.de/universitaet/verwaltung/abteilung-ii-studentische-angelegenheiten/hochschulpruefungsamt-hpa/anmeldung-zur-bachelor-/masterarbeit>

Examination regulations:

<https://www.uni-trier.de/studium/beratung-service/service/ordnungen>

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Themenbereiche für BA-/BEd- und MA-/MEd-Arbeiten

Prof. Dr. Sabine Arndt-Lappe (Engl. Sprachwissenschaft)

All topics will require active research on the basis of (authentic) language data rather than purely summarising the research findings of other people. If you are writing your BA thesis with me, this will usually mean that you will either work with a corpus (in a wider sense) or conduct an experimental or an elicitation study.

I'm happy to supervise a wide range of topics for BA theses that may cover a structural aspect of the English language (e.g. its phonology/pronunciation, phonetics, morphology, syntax), its pragmatics, or aspects related to language processing (psycholinguistics), (second) language acquisition, and bilingualism.

Here are some examples of topics from past BA theses:

- Phonological variation: Intrusive /r/ in the spoken BNC
- The dative alternation in English as an L2
- Gender, Profession and Politeness in Scripted Dialogue: A Corpus Study
- Do phonological constraints affect the preferred ordering of binomials? A nonsense word study
- Interpreting Compounds In and Out of Context: An Empirical Study

Amanda Boyce, M.A. (Engl. Literaturwissenschaft, only BA-/BEd-theses)

I will be happy to supervise papers in the following subject areas and their adjacent areas. Generally, but specifically in the area of fan/reader-response studies, I also welcome papers with empirical approaches. Please sign up for my office hours via stud.ip to discuss possible topics.

1. Queer/Feminist Fiction and Film

Example: "Superheroes and Gender: Negotiating Female Identity as a Superhero in the MCU"

2. Contemporary Science Fiction & Fantasy

Example: "Humanity in Flux: A Comparison of the Negotiation of Humanity in Philip K. Dick's Short Story *Human Is* and its Television Adaptation in *Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams*"

3. Young Adult Fiction

Example: "Between Boys and Blood: Vampirism, Queerness and Coming of Age in Rainbow Rowell's YA Novel *Carry On*"

4. Fan Studies/Reader-Response Studies

Example: "Reclaiming the Wand: Minority Representation in *Harry Potter* Fan Fiction"

5. Graphic Narratives

Example: "Deafness on Paper: Empathy and Sound Representation in Cece Bell's Graphic Memoir *El Deafo*"

Tammy Ganster, M.A. (Engl. Sprachwissenschaft, only BA- and BEd theses, limited capacity)

List of subject areas:

- Morphology
- Phonology
- Interactions between Morphology and Phonology
- Psycholinguistics

Prof. Dr. Ralf Hertel (Engl. Literaturwissenschaft)

If you plan to write your thesis with me, I expect you to obtain a firm grasp of the secondary literature available on the chosen subject, but also crucially to go beyond what you find in these sources in order to develop your own perspective and come up with an original piece of writing. Apart from discussing possible topics with me in a first meeting, I also strongly advise you to see me in my office hours at least twice before you hand in your thesis; once, to discuss the structure of your paper as well as your research; once to discuss formal conventions. Please also make sure that your thesis is thoroughly proofread – ideally by a native speaker – before handing it in.

I am happy to supervise theses on various subjects – please discuss with me during my office hours. Possible topics include:

1. Early Modern Literature and Culture / Shakespeare

Examples: The Negotiation of National Identity in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Otherness in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Plays*

2. New English Literatures and Postcolonial Literature

Example: Negotiating Hybrid Identities in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

3. The Contemporary Novel

Example: Representing Non-Human Identity in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

4. Canadian Literature and Culture

Example: Negotiating Indianness in E. Pauline Johnson's Poetry, Depicting Diversity in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*

5. Travel Writing

Example: Sir Walter Raleigh's Description of the New World, Negotiating Englishness in Auden and Isherwood's *Journey to a War*

6. English Modernism

Example: Androgynous Perspectives in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, The Asian Influence on Ezra Pound's Imagism

7. Poetry from the early modern period to the contemporary

Example: Ecocritical Perspectives on T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land", W.H. Auden and the Sonnet Tradition

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Hoffmann (Engl. Sprachwissenschaft)

All topics will require active research on the basis of authentic language data rather than purely summarising the research findings of other people.

1. Language and the Internet

Students working in this area will be expected to investigate a specific feature of language use on the Internet (e.g. chat-rooms, blogs, newsgroups, twitter, etc.). One option would be to compare Internet-derived data with more traditional modes of communication (e.g. letters to the editor vs. comments written by readers on a news website; chat-room interaction vs. spontaneous conversations, etc.), but this is not a requirement. This topic may require you to compile your own corpus of Internet-derived data – help on how to do this will be provided.

2. The making of modern English grammar

Students choosing this topic will be expected to trace one feature of grammatical change (e.g. the use of the progressive, *do*-support, etc.) over time. The actual time period under investigation of course depends on the selected feature, but many topics are likely to deal with Early and Late Modern English (and a comparison with Present-Day English data). You will be expected to compare your results to previous work and ideally, your findings complement/test the work of others on the basis of different data.

3. English vs. another language

Using your knowledge of English and one other language, compare and contrast some characteristics(s) of both languages, choosing from the following general areas of linguistic structure: (1) grammatical constructions and/or morphology (e.g. tenses, modal verbs, conditional sentences...) (2) lexical domains such as colour terms, spatial prepositions, verbs expressing movement and manner of movement, verbs expressing emotions.... (3) patterns of politeness usage.

4. (Im)politeness analysis of confrontational interactions on TV

You will need to collect confrontational episodes from television (e.g. Wife swap, Pop Idol, To be a Soldier, Airplane) (I am open to suggestions about other sources of confrontational data). The aim of the project will be to explain how (im)politeness is achieved and to assess how well (im)politeness theory accounts of the interaction in the chosen data. You will need to be familiar with politeness theory (e.g. Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987), as well as Culpeper's work extending it (e.g. Culpeper 1996, 2003, 2005). It would help, as with any BA dissertation, to give your project a particular focus (e.g. to focus on prosodic aspects, responses to 'impolite' attacks, discursal patterns).

5. Speech acts in the history of English

You will choose one or two speech acts (e.g. apologising, thanking) and use historical data to trace its/their development over a time-span of several centuries. Your investigation can be restricted to the actual speech act itself; alternatively, you can also extend it to include an analysis of the way communicative partners respond to the speech act under consideration. For an extensive bibliography in historical pragmatics, see <http://es-jucker.uzh.ch/HistPrag.htm>.

Lisa Klassen, M.Ed. (TEFL, Fachdidaktik Englisch, only BA-/BEd-theses)

cf. list of subject areas of Prof. Dr. Henning Rossa

Dr. Bettina Kraft (Engl. Sprachwissenschaft/Fachdidaktik)

With me, students have the choice of writing a theoretical term paper or an empirical term paper which uses theoretical approaches AND authentic data, covering the following topic areas:

1. CALL - Computer Assisted Language Learning

Modern media play a very important role in language teaching nowadays. In their term papers students can discuss the various media and their applications in the foreign language classroom.

2. Teaching English as a foreign language

Topics include didactic theories, learning and teaching methods, cognitive approaches to learning and other aspects related to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

3. Linguistics for L2 Teachers

Students are invited to link concepts from linguistics (such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, lexis) with practical applications in the foreign language classroom.

4. Lexical Semantics

Major areas of lexical semantics (such as word formation, morphology, prototype theory, script semantics, etc.) should be linked with applications for the foreign language classroom.

5. Cross-cultural pragmatics (and language teaching)

Notions of cultural differences and similarities and identity should be the focus of discussion, ideally discussing theoretical approaches and practical applications for foreign language teaching.

1. Modernist Literature from Great Britain

Working on modernist literature will mean identifying and contextualizing central characteristics, e.g. inward movement and innovative narrative techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, figural point of view, and collage; you will have to base this on research into the historical-cultural background (including major technological and scientific developments, and related 'isms', e.g., cubism, futurism, imagism, naturalism, symbolism, etc.) from the Victorian age to the interwar years. Authors include Conrad, Eliot, (Hardy), Joyce, Lawrence, Lewis, Pound, (Wells), Woolf, Yeats.

2. Forms and Functions of Poetry

Debating and analysing forms and functions of poetry will require a bit of a practical experience – for you need to understand and outline the motivations and mechanisms behind *poeia* (the making of poetry), hearing and seeing the evocative-mimetic dimensions, including the major poetic / literary devices (much more than just metaphor and alliteration ...). You can choose from the main forms (such as sonnet, ballad, ode, villanelle, limerick), but also from all kinds of free verse; major representatives worth discussing are, for instance, Atwood, Auden, Blake, Cooley, Cummings, Dickinson, Donne, Eliot, Frost, Heaney, Keats, Kroetsch, Ondaatje, Plath, Pound, Shakespeare, Shelley, Walcott, Wordsworth.

3. Postcolonial Writing from Australia and New Zealand

This topic area necessitates basic knowledge of postcolonial theories – in other words, you will need to look at the respective histories of colonization and (literary) emancipation in Australia and/or New Zealand, with a focus on the Aborigines and/or Maoris, on the roles of cultural traditions and mythologies and mutual appropriations, on populations and ethnic distribution, on land claims and treaty rights. Among the eligible authors are Carey, Duff, Grace, Grenville, Hulme, Ihimaera, Malouf, Mudrooroo, Turner Hospital, White.

4. British Historiographic (Meta)Fiction

Working on historiographic fiction (which often has a self-mirroring level built in) requires questioning the nature of writing history (and ways of critically reflecting upon it). You should discover and interpret how and why human beings are defined in these contexts by environments and events, through the act of narration; this in turn asks you to outline the respective text's methods of researching, of presenting 'story', of engaging audience. Notable authors of British historiographic fiction are Ackroyd, Barker, Barnes, Carter, Fowles, Ishiguro, McEwan, Swift, Winterson.

5. Postmodern and Multicultural Canadian Writing

Postmodern and multicultural (Canadian) texts often overlap in their orientations – they can be seen as (playful, subversive) treatments and rewritings of cultural constructions such as the nation, notions of race and identity, history and mythology (often with a regional focus). To discuss these texts critically, you will need to access related concepts and theories (e.g., reader-response; how the postmodern re-accentuates modern stances in a new context) and / or to concentrate on the heritage and political interdependence – in relation to the cultural mainstream – of Natives and many other groups of different ethnic backgrounds, such as African, Caribbean, Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, etc. Eligible writers would be Bissoondath, Clarke, Cohen, Goto, Hill, King, Kogawa, Kroetsch, Lai, Lee, Mayr, Ondaatje, Richler, van Herk, Wah, Wiebe.

Prof. Dr. Henning Rossa (TEFL, Fachdidaktik Englisch)

Students pursuing a B.Ed./M.Ed. thesis are invited to explore a wide range of topics within the scope of *Fachdidaktik*, a few central areas are specified below. The thesis investigates one (or more), explicitly stated research question(s) employing a scientific, i.e. systematic method of inquiry. This empirical approach implies the collection and analysis of data and a discussion of the particular method of inquiry (e.g. action research, introspection, meta-analysis, experiment, measurement instruments).

Central research areas within TEFL, *Fachdidaktik Englisch*

- What does it mean to know a language? Developing language abilities in the EFL-classroom and in other learning environments.
- Analysing L2 development / Learner Language
- Language Assessment, including Classroom-based Approaches (*Leistungsmessung, Diagnose, Förderung*)
- Language Policy, Educational Standards, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- What constitutes effective language teaching?
- Interaction in ISLA (Instructed Second Language Acquisition)
- Providing Corrective Feedback in the EFL-Classroom
- The Intercultural Dimension of Language Learning
- Task-based Language Learning and Assessment in Inclusive Education
- Designing and Evaluating Tasks and Materials for the EFL-Classroom
- Teaching Literature
- Teaching Culture
- Teaching Film
- Learning Objectives: e.g. (Intercultural) Communicative Competence, Language Awareness, Mediation, Metacognition, Learning Strategies)
- Making use of media in the EFL-Classroom
- Bilingual Education: Content and Language Integrated Learning
- History of Language Teaching and Learning
- Early Foreign Language Learning
- How do language teachers come to know what they know and do what they do in the classroom? Research on teacher cognition and professional development.

All topics will require active research on the basis of (authentic) language data rather than purely summarising the research findings of other people.

1. Language and Literature

Literary texts offer a rich source of data for linguistic analysis, which may provide new insights into the text. For example, you could examine the representation and function of non-standard varieties of English in one or several texts or analyse the style of an individual author, possibly in comparison to his or her contemporaries.

Examples: “The Language of Caribbean Immigrants in Andrea Levy’s *Small Island*”
 “Jane Austen’s Style”
 “Jamaican Creole, Dread Talk in Rasta and Dancehall Lyrics”

2. Varieties of English

The likelihood of a learner of English to encounter a native speaker of Standard British English with an RP accent is becoming less and less, as more speakers of second- language varieties, such as Indian English, Nigerian English or Jamaican English are entering the scene. But there are also many distinctive first-language varieties in the English-speaking world, such as African American English, Irish English or Australian English, as well as differences between different social groups (e.g. men/women, middle-class/working-class). If you would like to explore one of the many Englishes worldwide, you will have to identify a suitable source of data and a focus for your analysis.

Examples: “Codeswitching between Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole in Phone-In Radio Shows”
 “Lexical Differences between Male and Female Speakers in Britain”
 “Lexico-syntactic Patterns in Canadian English”

3. The Politics of English as a World Language

English is used as an official language in many countries of the world. What are the consequences for the indigenous languages? For the country’s education system? For those who do not speak English? These are some of the questions you can research in this context. The analysis will involve looking at official policy statements, government reports or statistics, as well as the coverage of language-related topics in the media.

Examples: “The Three-Language-Formula in the Indian Education System”
 “The Status of English in Today’s South Africa”
 “English as Medium of Instruction in Kenya”

4. Corpora and Language Teaching

The advent of huge computer-readable text corpora has changed the tools of language teaching: corpus-based dictionaries and grammars are giving teachers and learners immediate access to authentic language use. But there is much more that we can do with corpora in the classroom, e.g. make worksheets based on concordances to encourage students to find out about language patterns on their own.

Examples: “Prepositions in a German Learner Corpus”
 “Using Concordances in the Classroom”
 “The Present Perfect: Textbook Presentation and Corpus Evidence”

5. Text Types

You will have noticed that the English used in news broadcasts is very different from that used in informal conversations. The genre, or text type, is a very important factor determining language use and norms may vary between different varieties of English.

Examples: “The Syntax of Conversations”
 “Job Applications from India”
 “The Language of Singaporean Weblogs”

These are only some examples of what you can do. If you have a different idea for a topic, please feel free to come and talk to me about it. I am also willing to supervise theses on topics similar to those suggested by my colleagues in linguistics but might refer you to another colleague if your topic choice is more in their area of expertise.

JProf. Dr. Nele Sawallisch ([North] American Literature and Culture)

I am available for Bachelor's and Master's theses in the fields of American Literature and Culture. Please note: All topics will require active, independent research rather than purely summarizing the research findings of other people. What is more, your thesis must conform to the thesis-driven, Anglo-American model and follow the *MLA Handbook* for researchers and writers. If you plan to write a thesis with me, contact me ahead of time for an appointment via zoom or in person to discuss your initial ideas for a topic and working thesis. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

1. Early American Literature

Early American literature covers a broad variety of genres that include the orature and literature of indigenous peoples, religious literature, poetry, historiography, forms of life writing, travel writing, protest and abolitionist writing by indigenous and Black people, and many more. These genres inform a complex colonial landscape leading up to the American Revolution and shape the early years of the "United" States.

2. American Literature from the nineteenth century onwards

The Civil War as a transformative event also changed American literature. Following the so-called American Renaissance, for instance, post-war literature began experimenting with the realist mode and, eventually, naturalism at the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, writers engaged with (transatlantic) modernism, followed by—contested by?—post-modernism, and, in the current moment, present readers with a literary landscape that is as diverse, outspoken, multilingual and multi-medial as perhaps never before.

3. African American or African Canadian Literatures

In conjunction with the topics outlined above and below, you are encouraged to consider the full diachronic and thematic breadth of the expressive power of Black people in North America—from the oral traditions of song to the slave narrative, from political writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the creative expressions in poetry, the short story, or the novel, from the haunting realism of the slave narrative to the speculative force of sci-fi, cli-fi, Afrofuturism, and more.

4. Comedy and Humor Studies

As a consequence of my post-doctoral and current research, I am inviting you to consider "American" humor and its various forms of expression across different media—including "funny" fiction, and "funny" media genres such as the sitcom, late night, stand-up,..., and how they intersect with question of race, class, gender, and theoretical approaches from postcolonialism to affect theory and whatever else you find engaging.

5. Canadian Literature

You are welcome to expand into comparative "North American" topics, including the option to consider Anglo- and Francophone texts together in one thesis (the longer text or majority of primary materials must be Anglophone).

Marina Schramm, M.A., 1. und 2. Staatsexamen (TEFL, Fachdidaktik Englisch)

cf. list of subject areas of Prof. Dr. Henning Rossa

Laura Witz, M.A. (Engl. Sprachwissenschaft, only BA-/BEd-theses)

I am open to supervising a range of topics in English linguistics, including areas such as psycholinguistics (language processing), (second) language acquisition, bilingualism, syntax, and morphology. If you are writing your BA thesis under my supervision, your research will typically involve conducting an experimental study. To discuss potential topics, please sign up for my office hours through Stud.IP or send me an email.

Here are some examples of topics in the different fields:

Psycholinguistics:

- The Impact of Word Frequency on Word Recognition and Processing Speed in German and Non-German Speakers
- The Effect of Sentence Complexity on Word Recognition: A Lexical Decision Task

Morphology:

- Creativity in Noun-Noun Compound Interpretation
- Investigating the Role of Blending in Lexical Innovation: An Experimental Approach to Word Formation

Second Language Acquisition:

- Processing of Phrasal Verbs by German Native Speakers
- The Influence of First Language Transfer on Second Language Syntax

Bilingualism:

- Code-Switching as a Marker of Identity
- The Impact of Proficiency on Lexical Access in Bilinguals: A Cross-Linguistic Lexical Decision Task