Recommended books for the oral exam in English linguistics (‘Magister’ + ‘SE’)

Note: The following list is not comprehensive and only preliminary, as are the recommendations given. A knowledge of the books will not automatically guarantee that you pass the exam since the exam will not be confined to a reproduction of the books read but rather require you to develop your own survey and perspective. The list does not replace personal advice that you can seek in our office hours.

In the oral exam, students need to prepare 2 major fields of linguistics for any 20-minute share of linguistics in the exam, 3 major field for 30 minutes and 4 major fields if they specialize in linguistics. Choose at least three authors per topic and make sure that the book sections and/or articles amount to at least 90 pages per topic. Students can optionally choose one topic in the area of language change; those opting for Middle English are required to prepare some 500 lines of a Middle English text; those opting for Old English are required to prepare some 100 lines of verse or 150 words of prose of an Old English text. Within each major field of modern linguistics, you should focus on one specific area that should not be too narrow (e.g. ‘Comparison of vowels in BrE and AmE’ or ‘Prestige innovations in English pronunciation’ if your major field was ‘Phonetics/Phonology’). In addition, you should have a good working knowledge of the very essentials of each of your major fields (i.e. you should know about basic key terms and definitions (e.g. in word-formation: stem versus root versus base, inflection versus derivation versus compounding).

Each of your topics should be studied on the basis of at least three titles essential to the field. Keep in mind that the exam you are about to take is in English linguistics, not in general linguistics or psychology, i.e. your preparation always ought to centre around English. This is particularly relevant for students focussing on psycholinguistics or sociolinguistics but applies to all areas of linguistics. Some recommendations given below are specific to one examiner; they are marked ‘(And)’ (Professor Anderwald) and ‘(Mey)’ respectively.

(1) General introductions & reference works (useful for background knowledge)


New introductions (I have not studied them yet):


For a general background in grammar see the recommended grammars in the syntax section below.

(2) Phonetics/Phonology, English spelling

As a specialist for phonetics/phonology, you can gain a good general background from introductory textbook such as Roach/Hartman, Dretzke, or Cruttenden and you ought to have a basic survey of special dictionaries of English pronunciation. Among the latter, Wells’ LPD (2nd ed.) is recommended in particular because of its extensive introduction and its informative “Notes on pronunciation and phonetics” (list on p. iv). See also Meyer (2002) under “Varieties”. Alternatively, you can also focus on the sound-spelling relationship. The standard work of reference here is Carney (1994). RECOMMENDATION: Focus on a comparison of RP and GA and use Kretzschmar 2008 [2004], Meyer (2002), Upton 2008 [2004], the relevant sections for RP and GA in Wells (1982) are an ideal background preparation.


Meyer, Matthias L.G. 2002. “Revisiting the phonemes of BrE and AmE.” *Anglia* 120, 244-265.


(3) Morphology

Morphology covers both word-formation (a wide area that requires further specialization alongside a basic overview) and inflexional morphology (where you should have a general overview). Candidates taking a 20/30-minute exam and specializing in word-formation only should focus on either compounding or derivation including zero-derivation and should be able to define and illustrate the minor types (back-formation, blending, acronymy in the wider sense of the term, clipping). Marchand (1968) is the classic reference publication for word-formation. If Marchand is on your list and if you are a specialist for compounding you should study pp. 11-39 as well as sections 2.3 (type steamboat) 2.5 (types craftsman, driver’s seat etc.), 2.13 (type watchmaker), 2.17 (type color-blind etc.) and 2.19 (types icy-cold, Anglo-French etc.) Specialists for affixation who have Marchand on their list should study pp. 129-139, pp. 209-229 as well as sections 3.25 (bypo- 3.23 (fore), 3.66 (vice), 4.21 (-dom), 4.55 (-ity), 4.65 (-menty), 4.61 (-hood), 4.68 (-ness), 4.74 (-ster), 4.80.2 (-like). RECOMMENDATION: Focus on either compounding or derivation and study the relevant sections of at least three of the following four publications: Plag (2003), Bauer (1983 for compounding or 2003 for derivation), Adams (2001, see recommendations given at the end of this entry), Marchand (1968).

If you are a specialist for derivation, Bauer (2003) should be preferred over Bauer (1983). If Plag is included on your list, you should also be able to talk about his psychological model of word-formation, his account of the strata and his concept of parsability. NEW: Recommended reading

**package for derivation:** (a) Bauer & Huddleston 2005, pp. 1623-1630 + 1667-1674; (b) Bauer 2003, ch. 3+9 + relevant sections on conversion (see index); (c) Plag 2003, ch. 2, 4, 7.2; (d) focus on the following affixes based on Marchand 1969: sections 3.25 (bypo-) 3.23 (fore), 3.66 (vice), 4.21 (-dom), 4.55 (-ity), 4.65 (-menty), 4.61 (-hood), 4.68 (-ness), 4.74 (-ster), 4.80.2 (-like).


Adams, Valerie. 2001. *Complex words in English*. Harlow: Longman. [specialists for derivation should particularly study chs 3 “Prefixes”, 4 “Suffixes” and 9 “Stem formations”. Specialists for compounding should particularly look at chs 6 “Noun compounds”, 7 “Adjective compounds, 8 “Verb compounds”]


Marchand, Hans. 1969. *Categories and types of present-day English word-formation*. München: Beck. [a classic in the field; still the most comprehensive and authoritative study of English word-formation; see detailed recommendations above]


(4) **Semantics (mainly synchronic), idiomaticity**

Popular topics in this area have been ‘Distinctive features’ and ‘Lexical relations’ (synonymy, homonymy, polysemy, various types of oppositions (antonyms, converse terms, complementsaries). Otherwise any major chapter from Lipka (2002), Palmer (1981) or Cruse (1986) or Ullmann (1967) might inspire you to alternative topics. The reading list of students wishing to specialize on prototype theory should include at least John R. Taylor. 1995. *Linguistic categorization. Prototypes in linguistic theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press or Georges Kleiber. 1993. *Prototypensemantik*. Tübingen: Narr. (Narr Studienbücher). If you wish to focus on idioms, your first reading should be Cowie/Mackin/McCaig. **RECOMMENDATION:** Focus on lexical relations and study the relevant sections from Lipka (2002), Cruse (1986) [chapters 4+12], Hurford [units 10 & 11], Ullmann (1967) [chapter on synonymy or ambiguity]. Instead of Hurford, you can also study Palmer (1981) [chapters 4+5].


Cruse, D.A. 1986. *Lexical semantics*. Cambridge: CUP (Cambridge textbooks in linguistics) [quite useful for specialists in lexical relations; see esp. chapters 4, 9, 10, 12].


Lipka, Leonhard. 2002. *English Lexicology: Lexical structure, word semantics & word-formation* [2nd ed. with the title *An outline of English lexicology: Lexical structure, word semantics, and word-formation* may also be used]. Tübingen: Niemeyer.


(5) Pragmatics

You should be familiar with basic notions such as the difference between presupposition, entailment and implicature (use Grundy and Levinson), truth conditions, maxims of conversation and hedging. Popular topics include ‘speech acts’ (use Austin, Grundy and Mey (1995 or 1998) and politeness in English (you should know about specific elements of politeness in English). RECOMMENDATION: Focus on speech acts and study Austin (1962), Grundy (2000, chapter 8) and the relevant section(s) in Mey (1995).


(6) Syntax (including “The verb phrase”)

The framework set out by Randolph Quirk et al. in the CGEL (see below) has turned out to be both intelligible to non-specialists and also fairly versatile and is recommended here despite individual weaknesses (most of which can be remedied without abandoning the framework as a whole). A very useful coursebook that uses this framework and that can also be used for self-tuition is Aarts/Aarts (1982). The book is out of print but a copy that you can borrow for a brief interval is available in room 216. RECOMMENDATION: Focus on objects in English and make a comparison between Aarts & Aarts (1982) [chapters 7 + 8] and Meyer (2009). Alternatively, focus more generally on the framework in Aarts & Aarts [specialize primarily on chapters (3 or 6) + (7 or 8) + Appendix] and compare it to Huddleston & Pullum (2005) [chapter 2 or 4 or 5]. Alternatives: You can specialize on English adjectives (e.g. attributive versus predicative adjectives or adjectives versus determiners or modifiers of English adjectives) or more generally on the noun phrase in English.


One of the best introductions to generative syntax is


(7) Sociolinguistics / Varieties

Since sociolinguistics and varieties of English are related and overlapping fields of study, they are taken together here. The headings of the major chapters in Wardhaugh may inspire you to specific subtopics of sociolinguistics that you can specialize on. Anyone specializing on regional varieties should have read McArthur’s *Oxford guide to World English* which covers all major varieties of English. For Canadian English, Chamber’s essay “English in Canada” should give you a GOOD start (available in R 216). Many useful articles can be found in Kortmann & Schneider (see recommendations below). Students who would like to tackle the topic ‘Social variation’ without having specific issues in mind, could read (a) Wardhaugh 2006 (ch. 7 “Some findings and issues”); (b) Mesthrie 2001 + one chapter from Mesthrie 2000; (c) Crystal 2004 (*Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*, ch. 22 “Social variation”).

**Sociolinguistics**

**NEW: recommended package:** Mesthrie 2001, Labov 1971, Wardhaugh 2006, ch. “Some findings and issues”.


Holmes, Janet. 2001. *Introduction to sociolinguistics*. Harlow etc.: Longman. (And)


Wardhaugh, Ronald. 2006. An introduction to sociolinguistics. Oxford: Blackwell [one of the best and most comprehensive introductions to the field].

Regional varieties

Recommendation: Read McArthur first for a general survey of regional dialects of English.


Kortmann, Bernd & eds Edgar W. Schneider. 2008. A handbook of varieties of English: Mouton de Gruyter. [Note: This is a repackaged paperback edition of Kortmann & Berndt (2004) which contains the exact same essays in four volumes. Pages have been renumbered so page references given below do not match the paperback edition.]


Wells, John. 1982. *Accents of English*. Cambridge: CUP. [one of the best introductions to the phonetics and phonology of English dialects around the world; 3 volumes]

(8) **History of English and language change (general)**

**General**

**Middle English (Chaucer)**
Candidates ought to be able to define the chronological and dialectal position of Chaucer’s English (delimitation of Late ME from Early ME and from OE as well as from Early Modern English and from Present-day English, major changes in pronunciation between ME and Modern English, the position of London English in the landscape of Middle English dialects, major features of its pronunciation and morphology, characterization of its vocabulary, metrical features).

Students focussing on Chaucer ought to prepare 500 lines from the *Canterbury Tales* (use the glossary provided in Berndt 1960) and ought to be able to both read a selected passage with an appropriate EME pronunciation as well as to translate and to commentate it from a linguistic perspective. Recommendation: Study at least Popp (1997; with special emphasis on the dates printed in bold in the ‘Lautgeschichtlicher Kalender’), Berndt (1989) and Fries (1985).

Berndt, Rolf. 1960. *Einführung in das Studium des Mittelenglischen unter Zugrundelegung des Prologs der “Canterbury Tales”*. Halle: VEB Niemeyer [you can borrow a copy for a brief interval (if you deposit your ID) in room 216 (‘Hilfskräfte’); very reliable in the area of sound change; highly recommendable glossary and a good section on Chaucer’s verse (pp. 225-232)].
Popp, Margret. 1997. Chaucer’s Aussprache: Einführung anhand der Würzburger Chaucer-Kassette. Würzburg [mimeographed]. [Book + tape containing the GP + ‘The Miller’s Tale’, slightly abridged]; can be ordered directly from the author via email: margret.popp@mail.uni-wuerzburg.de; price: approx. 14€; study especially the comments on the 500 lines you are studying in depth and the “Kalender der lautgeschichtlichen Ereignisse”]

**Old English**
The exam will be based on a text, taken either from Alfredian translation literature (e.g. Bede, Orosius, Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*) or from late West Saxon original writing (e.g. Ælfric, Æthelstan, Wulfstan), from which an extract of c. 800 words has to be prepared for the exam (translation, linguistic analysis).


(esp. the chapters on phonology, morphology, lexicon)


