

Final Exam Topics

I. English Major (Anglisztika)

In the oral exam students pick at random one item/task from group A and one from group B matching their study track. They are expected to synthesize what they have learnt in various courses. It is recommended that in preparation students use the notes they made during their studies as well as the bibliographical items included in the lecture syllabuses. After each item students find guiding annotations written in smaller characters.

Group A

See also Note at end of list.

1. Describe the sound system of Present-day English and the recent sound changes of Standard British English.

Key concepts to be discussed: mechanism of speech sound production, vowels, consonants, minimal pairs, phoneme, allophone, distinctive features, free variation, trisyllabic laxing, intrusive r, linking r, Received Pronunciation, Estuary English, glottal stop, th-fronting, l-vocalization, yod-dropping, h-dropping.

2. Provide a general view of the structure of English words.

- Different interpretations of the notion of word (lexeme, word-form, citation form)
- Simple and complex words; types of complex words
- Morphemes, morphs, allomorphs; types of morphemes
- The conditionings of allomorphs

3. Categorize English verbs with respect to their valency patterns. Describe the different syntactic environments English verbs can have.

English verbs can have different syntactic environments according to their various valency patterns. By the term 'syntactic environment' we refer to the possible obligatory and optional building blocks, constituents in the sentence organized around the verb. Candidates are asked to describe syntactic environment with the help of formal and functional labels those constituents can have and categorize verbs with respect to their syntactic valency patterns.

4. Identify levels of linguistic representation.

Outline what the concept 'level of linguistic representation' means in linguistic theory. List and characterize the scope of each level that is identified in linguistic description and describe their place in a hierarchy of the linguistic system. List and interpret the nature of special types of linguistic units at each level. Point to possibilities of the interaction of the levels identified.

5. Discuss the contribution of the historical comparative study of English to the understanding of irregularities in the structure of modern English.

Discuss the place of English among the languages of the world from the viewpoint of typological and genetic classification, and how its place is established. What is the difference between the processes of ablaut and umlaut and what is the role of these processes in the emergence of Modern English irregular nouns and verbs?

6. Discuss how interlanguage can be analyzed in various contexts.

Define interlanguage and context. Introduce theories related to these concepts. Explain why applied linguistics is concerned with interlanguage. Provide details for the analysis part of the question, using your own experience.

7. Discuss ways of approaching and analyzing individual differences in L2 development.

Define individual differences. Explain their relevance in psycholinguistics. How can L2 development be characterized by such differences? Which one has the strongest influence on processes and outcomes?

8. Discuss how the English language was shaped by the various ethnic groups arriving in turn in the course of history, and how changes in the social status of the English language are reflected in early and medieval English literature.

In the answer to this question the student should show a knowledge of ethnic groups (Celts – Romans - Angles, Saxons and Jutes – Vikings/Danes/Norsemen – Normans) arriving in turn in the British Isles and the impacts they made in language and the status of the English language: Anglo-Saxon – French – medieval English. Extra points may be awarded for mention of Welsh and Irish as pre-English literary languages. Also for completing the line of ethnic arrivals: Jews (Cromwell readmits), Dutch, Huguenots, 20th and 21st centuries.

9. Provide a historic argument for a multi-denominational, multi-religious and largely agnostic Britain.

Here on the one hand the examinee is expected to show a knowledge of Lollardy and the Reformation, the complexity of the creation of the Church of England, subsequent proliferation of denominations/sects, later reforms (Methodist, Salvation Army) and the multifaith present nature of the Isles, from its streets to its diet to its political parties (all major parties contain non-Christian members). On the other a knowledge of more recent trends is expected to be known – the “post-Christian” 1960s, the forced closing-down and selling-off of church real estate with the disappearance of congregations. The social, rather than religious significance of naming oneself as “C of E”.

10. Provide what you consider to be the most important moments in the 19-20th century history of British suffrage.

Here the student should be able to show an awareness of the many stages of suffrage, and especially that the suffragette movement is only one later stage in the struggle for universal suffrage. The steps from the Chartist movement throughout the 19th century are of especial import. Major dates (and accompanying information) are 1867, 1884, 1918, 1928, 1969. Universal suffrage (also general suffrage or common suffrage) is the extension of voting privileges to all adults, without distinction to race, sex, belief or social status.

11. Explain immigration in historical and contemporary American social perspective.

Colonial and 19th century immigrants, reaction of Americans to newcomers in different periods. 20th century approaches to mass immigration: nativism, pluralism, multiculturalism and postethnic society. Immigration as a permanent issue on the local and national political agenda.

12. Explain the historical contexts of race relations as conflicts in the USA.

Early history of African American slavery and its consequences; abolitionism and abolitionists; segregation and struggle for equality, the educational platform; the Civil Rights Movement and its legacy in contemporary society.

13. Identify and discuss political and cultural issues in their historical embedding as they are portrayed in a play by Shakespeare.

Choose either *As You Like It* or *The Tempest*. In the case of *As You Like It*, discuss the popular Elizabethan genre of pastoral comedy, urban vs. country environments, and the theme of the usurpation of power. To talk about *The Tempest*, you may discuss it as a commentary on politics (usurpation, absolute monarchy vs. commonwealth) or as a

self-reflection of Elizabethan theater (Prospero as a director, the island as a theater, illusion vs. reality, the role of songs in the play).

14. Discuss social and cultural issues as well as questions of narrative style as they appear in a novel written by Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, one of the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, George Eliot or Thomas Hardy.

Choose a novel by one of the above enlisted authors, which you have studied in a seminar. Describe its form and the narrative technique and style the work uses. Identify the main characters and discuss the social and cultural issues and problems (related to class, gender and race, if applicable) portrayed through them. Discuss also the historical and ideological background of these issues in some detail.

15. Discuss important modernist features through the analysis of a novel written by Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf or D. H. Lawrence and a poem written by W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot.

Choose a novel by one of the above enlisted novelists and a poem by one of the above enlisted poets, relying on what you have studied in a seminar. Describe the themes addressed in these works. Discuss their use of modernist narrative techniques and poetic style by focusing on voice, perspective and the ways of portraying the self in the case of the novel, and symbols, rhetorical devices and ambiguities of tone in the case of the poem.

16. Discuss social and cultural issues in nineteenth-century prose fiction as they appear in two works by Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville or Mark Twain.

Literary reflections on the rise of capitalism and issues of class, race, and slavery; rural and urban America; the westward expansion, the regional cultures of New England and the Old South. The artist in American society. Symbolic expression and the Gothic mode. Innovations in narrative technique concerning voice and perspective.

17. Discuss representations of the Afro-American historical and cultural experience in the slave narrative, the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, and in a novel by Alice Walker or Toni Morrison.

The slave narrative as autobiography and reform literature. Economic and social change in the lives of African Americans after the Civil War. The aesthetic and cultural agenda of the Harlem Renaissance. Reflections on the Black historical experience and innovative narrative techniques in the contemporary Afro-American novel. Black feminism and the neo-slave narrative.

18. Discuss characteristics of modernism in three pieces of fiction and poetry by Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, or William Faulkner.

The United States as a poetic experience; democratic aesthetics, thematic and formal innovation in late Romantic poetry. The sense of place, the status of poetry and the poet in America (Robert Frost); the anti-Romantic view of nature and emphasis on the imagination (Wallace Stevens). Formal and thematic concerns of Modernist fiction. The international theme; The Lost Generation, the American Dream; the sense of defeat and nostalgia in the South. Experimentation with narrative voice and point of view.

Group B

Linguistics Study Track

1. Describe internal and external means of vocabulary extension.

Foreign words in English

- Productivity and lexicalization in word-formation; neologisms
- Derivation and compounding
- Non-affixal (extragrammatical) means of word-building (conversion, clipping, etc.)

2. Discuss aspects of the Theory of Speech Acts.

Discuss different aspects of meaning, the three kinds of acts utterances can have (*locution, illocution, perlocution*) and how they can vary with the context. Illustrate your answer with examples. Include the notion of *Felicity Conditions* in your answer. Explain the difference between *Direct* and *Indirect Speech Acts*.

3. Identify the modes of flexible meaning creation in contextualized utterances of conversation and discursive acts.

The prime examples for conversational and discursive acts are the speech acts which range from Performatives to Direct Speech Act to different degrees of Indirect Speech Acts. In the case of Performatives and Direct Speech Acts the identification of the illocutionary force of utterances (i.e. Speaker's communicative intention) is relatively straightforward as opposed to Indirect Speech Acts in which world knowledge, social knowledge, background knowledge, discourse knowledge, contextual knowledge and local knowledge play a crucial role, especially in interpreting implications, presuppositions and implicatures.

4. Discuss the Mental Lexicon as a major grammatical component of any natural language.

This question deals with the non-trivial aspect of the (mental) lexicon: it ought to be demonstrated by examples (lexical-frames and word forms) that a word-list of lexical items has an underlying architecture arranged along the lines of (i) morpho-syntactic behavior of the constituent elements and (ii) semantic relations among the lexical items determining word-choice and syntagmatic relations in language production.

5. Identify diagnostic tools in comparing the major varieties of English.

How can you distinguish major varieties of English by pronunciation, intonation? How can morphological and syntactic criteria contribute to identifying a variety of English? What is the relevance of linguistic interference for the emergence of varieties of English?

6. Discuss how psycholinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA. What role do individual differences play?

Students are expected to be able to discuss issues related to language learning and language acquisition, SLA and the linguistic environment, interlanguage and communicative competence, individual learner differences, language transfer, theoretical models of language acquisition and instructed SLA.

Applied Linguistics Study Track

1. Discuss ways in which proficiency in a second language develops. Focus on vocabulary and grammar in interlanguage studies.

Define proficiency and interlanguage. Explain how the two concepts are related. Discuss the relationship between lexis and syntax.

2. Discuss how psycholinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA. What role do individual differences play?

Define psycholinguistics and SLA. Discuss whether learning and acquisition are synonyms. Explain how individual differences are especially relevant in psycholinguistics.

3. Discuss how sociolinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA.

Define sociolinguistics and speech community. Discuss the concept of language standards.

4. Discuss ways in which oral presentations can be planned, rehearsed and conducted. What makes an oral presentation a good one?

Define coherence and communication. Explain how these notions are relevant in oral presentations. Rely on theory and your own experience with oral presentations.

5. Discuss ways in which written intercultural communication can be successful. Focus on informal and formal contexts.

Define intercultural communication. Explain how success can be achieved and measured. Rely on theory and your own experience with oral intercultural communication. Illustrate your views by using concrete context examples.

6. Discuss the main issues of designing and implementing empirical studies in applied linguistics. How do focus and research questions influence research design?

Discuss a quantitative and a qualitative data collection method. Define the terms research question and hypothesis. Explain how research may be designed to answer specific questions.

English Literature and Culture Study Track

1. Show how popular culture has changed its environments over the past two centuries.

Essentially here we are looking for the move from physical to virtual environments; from ad-hoc outdoor environments to more organised, often indoor ones; from “insider” to “outsider” environments and participants (university professors and stockbrokers parading as folk dancers or playing war games...). Since the birth of radio and cinema popular culture can be physically dis/replaced.

2. Discuss aspects of the media in contemporary Britain.

Here students should be aware of the major media forms: newspaper journalism, the radio, TV, web at local, national and electronic levels, and be able to name and characterize some companies. They should be aware of the difference between the geopolitical distribution of the British press. Some knowledge should be shown of media ownership (media moguls) from the early 20th century to the present day. They should have some awareness of the BBC claim of being the “window on the world” and that there is still a general idea on the part of members of the profession that they are moral watchdogs -- even though their exposures are not always for the most altruistic of reasons. The appropriate vocabulary: broadsheet/tabloid/paparazzi/news package/interview/leak etc. is expected to be used.

3. Discuss social and cultural issues as they appear in two literary pieces (novel, drama or poem) written after 1970.

Choose two literary works which represent different genres from your seminar studies, by authors like Jonathan Coe, Irvin Welsh, Caryl Churchill, Sarah Kane, Seamus Heaney, Carol Ann Duffy, etc. Describe the main characters or voice(s), and discuss the social and cultural issues and problems (related to class, gender and race, if applicable) portrayed through them. Discuss also the historical and ideological background of these issues in some detail.

4. Discuss characteristics of postmodern literature through the analysis of a contemporary novel or drama written after 1970.

Choose a novel or play by Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie or Tom Stoppard, which you have studied in a seminar. Discuss the ways in which it uses elements of postmodern literature, focusing on/giving examples of thematic ambiguities, experimentation with form and language, shifts in perspective, metafiction or metatheatre and intertextuality.

5. Give an overview of postcolonial cultures and discuss aspects of the postcolonial identity in the countries of the British Isles.

Define the concept of the postcolonial. Colonial relations within and outside Britain. The historical context of colonisation. Post/colonial influences in terms of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh cultures. Explain Salman Rushdie's concept of the "Empire Within Britain."

6. Identify British filmic subgenres in the post-WW II period with examples.

The structure of production and the studio system; the influence of the war on the film industry; major filmic subgenres and the post-war consensus: contradictions and paradoxes; the industry in relation to Hollywood and continental Europe; Free Cinema and the New Wave.

II. English Major with American Studies Specialization Track (Anglisztika amerikanisztika specializációval)

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Group A

See also Note at end of list.

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4. Discuss some archaic features of American English.

Survey the characteristics of American English (standard or dialect form) that can be considered conservative as opposed to British English. Concentrate on structural (phonological and morphological) features rather than on lexical differences. Comment also on the geographical distribution of some archaic features.

5. Discuss how interlanguage can be analyzed in various contexts.

Define interlanguage and context. Introduce theories related to these concepts. Explain why applied linguistics is concerned with interlanguage. Provide details for the analysis part of the question, using your own experience.

6. Discuss ways of approaching and analyzing individual differences in L2 development.

Define individual differences. Explain their relevance in psycholinguistics. How can L2 development be characterized by such differences? Which one has the strongest influence on processes and outcomes?

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Group B

1. Discuss features of American cognitive linguistics as a new approach to linguistic theory.

Describe the major differences between generative linguistics and cognitive linguistics. How do the notions 'embodiment', 'experience' and 'general cognitive mechanisms' define the bases of cognitive linguistics? What is the relevance of metaphorical thinking and our sense of three dimensional space for the cognitive approach? In what sense is cognitive linguistics a usage based theory?

2. Discuss aspects of analyzing cinematic discourse.

The filmic shot is a major unit in cinematic discourse. When describing a shot what are the most important parameters that count? What are the possible functions filmic shots can have? Hollywood genre films could be used as illustration here since genre analysis is another possible approach.

See also Note at end of list.

3. Discuss aspects of religious diversity in the United States of America.

Diversity as a key characteristic of religious life in North America. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. Specific features of American churches due to the absence of an established religion. Great variety of existing religions.

4. Discuss the role of education in American democracy.

Universal availability of public education in the USA. Its major goal is to provide equal access to the pursuit of happiness. Interdependence of the level of education and economic opportunities; local, state and federal control in American education.

5. Discuss experimentation and the portrayal of social and cultural issues in a twentieth-century American drama.

The representation of social and racial, and psychological barriers in twentieth-century American drama. Discuss one topic of your choice: the history, culture and language of racism, individual anxiety and racial memory (Eugene O'Neill); the failure of the American Dream (Arthur Miller), the collapse of family, community and communication (Edward Albee); racism and bigotry in the South (Tennessee Williams). Innovation and experimentation in dramaturgy; symbolism and expressionism.

6. Discuss the portrayal of the ethnic experience in two pieces of contemporary fiction by ethnic American authors.

Multicultural USA; the literature of racial and ethnic minorities; the representation of culturally specific experience; experimental techniques integrating oral traditions and questions of cultural memory; the work of Afro-American, Native American, Asian-American, Jewish & Chicano/a authors; the analysis of two novels and/or volumes of short fiction.

7. Discuss characteristics of postmodern literature in the USA through the analysis of a contemporary novel or drama written after 1970.

The postmodern condition; consumer society, popular culture, mass media and information technologies in the USA; postmodern features of narrative or dramaturgy in terms of content and form; postmodern fiction or drama in the American cultural landscape; an analysis of a contemporary text of the students' own choice from the seminar material.

8. Identify and characterize the various forms of contemporary American popular culture.

Discuss the difference between popular culture and mass culture; industrial vs. postindustrial society; commercial television; classification of music video clips; structural qualities of cartoons, problems of the essentialist definition of comics; fashion as the expression of identity, *haute couture* vs. *pret-a-porter*; characteristics of science fiction, thriller and horror novels/short stories and their filmic adaptations.

9. Discuss the ways in which the historical and geographical features of Canada have contributed to the modern development of the country.

Introduce the main events of pre- and post-European contact in Canadian history. Which were the historical and personal reasons of British migration to Canada? What are the most characteristic images of the changing West? How have images of the North shaped Canadian identity?

NOTE

For students who have attended and completed the lecture course on phonetics and phonology taught by András Bocz, the first question in the respective A sections of Parts I and II is the same as in the earlier version of the Final Exam Topics:

Discuss the relationship between pronunciation and word stress in English

Variable word stress in English; rhythmic (iambic) alternation of heavy, strong, stressed and weak, light, unstressed syllables; stressed syll.: full vowel unstressed syll.: reduced vowel; place of stress determined by: syntactic factors (word class), morphological factors (affixes), phonological factors (structure of the syllable).

Discuss approaches to analyzing the structuring of news in American newspapers.

Outline similarities and differences between narratives and news texts. Outline aspects of analyzing the structuring, cohesion, coherence of news. Discuss the interrelationship of the role of key words and framing of news. Characterize the nature of different types of news values in US based newspaper articles.