

LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION FOR BA AND MA SUPERVISION

Language and Linguistics in the Department of English centers around two interrelated academic specializations: sociolinguistics and discourse studies.

The members of staff listed below are available to supervise both MA- and BA-level projects. (Some staff can take on fewer supervisions than others.) Supervisors are not available to supervise every and any topic. It is expected that you tailor your thesis to fall within their areas of expertise. By the same token, you should approach the person with expertise in the topics and methods you are thinking of pursuing.

You are always advised to make contact with a potential supervisor as early as possible to sound out your ideas, explore your options, and establish if the potential supervisor feels comfortable with your possible topics and methods. You should be thinking at least one or, especially for MA students, two semesters in advance. The more detailed your initial proposition, the easier it is for staff to figure things out with you.

For BA students: As you prepare a proposition to share with a prospective supervisor, we recommend that you find an existing study to replicate or at least to model your project after. You should also find two or three studies dealing with similar topics or methods.

For MA students: If you would like to conduct fieldwork inside or outside Switzerland, you can apply for financial support from the Dekanat. In which case, you will need to think even further in advance about your project. More information can be found here:
https://www.philhist.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/finanzielle_unterstuetzung/feldspesen/index_ger.html

David Britain: Language variation and change (LVC), the dialectology of English (in its broadest sense – dialects of English around the world, ideologies of dialect, perceptual dialectology, dialect contact, isolation and attrition, the dialectological consequences of migration and other forms of mobility), geolinguistics and the dialectology-human geography interface, sociophonology. Preferred methods: first, second and third-wave variationism, analysis of (incl. self-collected) spoken corpora. See also: www.davebritain.weebly.com

Kellie Gonçalves: Multilingualism; language, mobility and tourism discourse; language and art; language and (blue-collar) workplaces; family language policy, language and gentrification. Preferred methods: (critical) ethnography; discourse analysis (written and spoken language); and social semiotics (multimodal discourse). For more information:
www.ens.unibe.ch/about_us/staff/dr_goncalves_kellie/index_eng.html

Hannah Hedegard: Language variation and change (LVC), World Englishes, sociophonetics, LVC in mass media, forensic phonetics, applications of sociolinguistics at the intersection of language and civil/human rights such as

language analysis for the determination of origin (LADO) and multilingualism in legal contexts. Preferred methods: variationist sociolinguistic approaches, analysis of pre-existing or self-collected spoken corpora, ethnography (for LVC); identification and elicitation tasks, critical inquiry (for forensic linguistics). See also:

www.ens.unibe.ch/about-us/staff/dr-des-hedegard-hannah/index-eng.html

Gwynne Mapes (available again for Spring 2023): Language and class inequality (elite discourse); language materiality (e.g., food and language); interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. analysis of recorded conversations); and language and (new)media (e.g. digital discourse). Preferred methods: ethnography; critical discourse analysis (written and spoken language); and social semiotics (multimodal discourse). See also:

www.ens.unibe.ch/about-us/staff/dr-des-mapes-gwynne/index-eng.html

Danielle Tod: Language variation and change (LVC), World Englishes, language in the Pacific, language attitudes. Preferred methods: variationist sociolinguistic approaches, analysis of spoken corpora, ethnography (for studies of variation and change), matched/verbal guise. See also:

<https://www.ens.unibe.ch/about-us/staff/ma-tod-danielle/index-eng.html>

Crispin Thurlow: Four broad areas: (1) language, class inequality and elite discourse; (2) language, social media and digital discourse; (3) language, global mobility and tourism discourse; (4) language and sex/uality. Preferred methods: critical discourse analysis (written and spoken language) and social semiotics (visual communication, multimodal discourse). Professor Thurlow is especially keen to supervise students interested in collaborating on his SNF-funded project Elite Creativities: Engaging the Language Work of Professional Wordsmiths. See also: www.crispinthurlow.net/

For BA students: We have excellent Language & Linguistics PhD researchers who you can rely on as “research mentors” for advice about data collection, analysis, etc. You might run your ideas past them, for example, and see if they have data collection which you could help them with as part of your own thesis.

Olivia Droz-dit-Busset: Media discourse; language work; digital discourse with a focus on self-branding and social media discourse; preferred method: critical discourse analysis of written and/or spoken language and social semiotics

Sarah Grossenbacher: Dialectology, language variation and change (LVC), East Anglian dialects, dialect and mobility, dialect contact, dialect mapping/cartography, human geography, quantitative methods using R (e.g., statistical models, data visualization).

Lara Portmann: Language work/ers; critical sociolinguistics; language/semiotic ideologies; digital discourse studies; interface texts; cultural politics of technology; discourse ethnography.