



# Education at the English Unit of the Department of Modern Languages, Helsinki University

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# Contents

- Student selection
- Staff and teaching
- Courses
- Research orientation



# Student intake

- Student intake based on yearly entrance exam
- Yearly intake ca. 80 students
  - ca. 65 English philology, 15 English translation
- Number of applicants participating in English philology entrance exam typically between 300 and 500
  - Intake percentage 13-20%



# Entrance Exam

- Entrance exam prepared by Unit staff
  - Measures English skills and understanding of basic literary and linguistic concepts
  - Based on reading, list of 2013:
    - Hebron, Malcolm: Mastering the Language of Literature. Palgrave Macmillan 2003.
    - Munday, Jeremy: Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and applications. 3rd Edition. Routledge 2012. Chapters 1 and 8–12.
    - Plag, Ingo et al.: Introduction to English Linguistics. 2nd revised edition. Mouton de Gruyter 2009.



# Entrance Exam 2013

- Handout



- Students selected for BA+MA
- Recent years' average production ca. 55 MAs per year
- Altogether the unit houses roughly 1000 students (incl. minor and non-active students) and 30+ teaching and research staff; both NS and NNS



# Studies at the Unit (300 cr)

Basic and  
Intermediate  
studies  
70 cr

Advanced studies  
+ MA thesis  
81 cr

English  
Philology  
151 cr

Minor studies  
50-120 cr

Other studies  
29-99 cr

Other  
149+ cr



- 10-year average for teacher qualifications at English Unit is 20 per year - roughly a third of all MA graduates
- Students apply separately for pedagogical studies at another department



# Courses

- All courses\* and materials in English
- Students study literature, linguistics and translation
- In addition to compulsory courses there are many optional ones freely electable
- Students may acquire expertise in the fields of their choice



# Example Courses

## Compulsory

Translation  
Academic writing  
British and Irish  
literature  
Global and regional  
variation  
Structural analysis  
Proseminar  
Methodology

## Optional

Travel writing  
Children's literature  
Shakespeare  
Applied linguistics  
Sociolinguistics  
Language attitudes  
Language and the new  
media  
Subtitling



# Teaching

- research based and oriented
- aims at developing independent critical thinking
- students learn to conduct academic research (pro gradu thesis)



# Testing & Assessment

- Up to individual teacher
- Typically in the form of longer essays, course exams, study journals, continuous assessment
- Scale 1-5



# Pro gradu thesis

- The candidate must display
  - understanding of scientific thinking
  - ability to plan and execute a research project applying such thinking
  - familiarity with relevant academic works
  - capability in producing a written report complying with academic standards



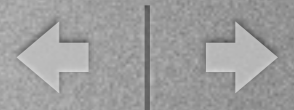
# Pro gradu thesis

- ca. 50-100 pages
- original work
- academic references
- academic style, register
- reviewed by both peers and professor



# Example

- Pro gradu thesis on  
Teaching English as a Foreign Language to  
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Pupils in Finland
- Topic is chosen by student, who is also  
responsible for acquiring relevant  
references and empirical data



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# Theses on Literature

- Beyond the Realms of Reality: Intertextuality and Metatheatre in the Plays of Martin McDonagh
- What Society Expects? The role of women in Anne Devlin's *Ourselves Alone* and Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation*
- Heroism in Fiction and Film. A Comparative Analysis of the Characters Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* and Horatio Cane in *CSI: Miami*



# Theses on Translation

- Translation Strategies for Wordplay in *The Simpsons*
- Original pirate material: translating Justin Somper's *Demons of the Ocean*
- When a Subtitler Met Harry Lime: Translation Strategies for Extralinguistic Cultural References in *Emmerdale*



# Theses on Applied Linguistics

- In Their Own Words: English Teachers' Reflections on Vocabulary Instruction
- 'Yeah yeah short hairstyle but anyways there was lot of backcomb hairdos and lots of makeup and kajal's' -Spoken interaction in EFL in a hairdressing setting
- Politeness in Questions – An analysis of the language teaching textbook dialogues from the 16th century to the 18th century
- "But in this case this sounds awesome!" A Comparative Study of Two Spoken Language Tasks for Upper Secondary School Students
- Cultural Perspective in EFL Textbooks: English as a Foreign International Language
- "Almost as annoying as the Yank; better accent, though" – Attitudes and Conceptions of Finnish Students towards Accents of English



- Questions and comments welcome!