

General remarks:

ENG349 is a 10 credit course composed of 8 sessions. The sessions can be spread over 8 weeks (1 session per week) or over 4 weeks with 2 sessions per week. The title of the course varies and in the last three semesters the topic were as follows:

- spring 2020: Words, words, words (taught by Dagmar Haumann)
- spring 2020: Words, words, words (taught by Dagmar Haumann)
- spring 2021: Grammaticalization, lexicalization, degrammaticalization (taught by Jerzy Nykiel)

While the course proceeded as expected in 2019, in 2020 and 2021 it was affected by the pandemic situation. In 2020 the teaching took place mostly fully online on Zoom, with the first two sessions being devoted to discussions of the video content published beforehand. In 2021 seven sessions were conducted online via Zoom and one was a hybrid session with one student present in the classroom and the remaining students present online via Zoom. Typically there are few students registered for the course (2 in 2019, 2 in 2020 and 6 in 2021) but, as noted by the external MA program sensor prof. Gjertrud Stenbreden in her report from 2020, it is a general tendency in Norway nowadays. Despite the low registration numbers, typically most students attend all the sessions and participate more or less actively in the class.

Materials necessary for the students to prepare for class are posted to MittUiB before each session. In 2021 I created a module on MittUiB devoted to each session. Before each session, I uploaded to the module PowerPoint materials and a short video where I discuss select questions related to the topic of the session, and tasks which were solved and discussed in class. The students were expected to watch the video, familiarize themselves with the Power Points, and read the chapters/section specified in the semester plan. My motivation behind posting pre-recorded videos was as follows: 1) I wanted to reserve more time for analysis of data and discussion in class 2) I wanted the students to come to class prepared to some extent and watching the videos beforehand made the preparation process a little more diversified and attractive. Also, the question discussed in the video was only a short excerpt from the topic of the class so the students often reached for the textbook to get a broader context when preparing for class. 3) The videos made the teaching and learning process a little more personal in the situation where the whole course was taught online.

Two textbooks are used in the course, plus a selection of article and chapters collected in a compendium or available online (the latter only in 2019 and 2020).

The exam

The exam is a week-long home exam followed by an oral exam. The home exam can be composed of parts where in one part the students always answer a few questions related to the topics discussed in class, and in the other part the students write an essay (in 2019 and

2020) or present a short analysis of the data they had collected in their research projects developed in the course of the semester (in 2021). The oral exam builds upon the home exam in that the students are asked questions where they go into more detail on some points mentioned or discussed in the home exam and clarify others.

All the students passed the exam between 2019 and 2021. The grade distribution was as follows:

- 2019:

A: 1

B: 1

- 2020:

B: 2

- 2021:

Home exam:

A – 2

B – 1

C – 1

D – 1

Oral exam:

A – 2

D – 2

E – 1

In my opinion this form of exam is an accurate assessment of the students' progress. The oral exam was an opportunity to verify the students' familiarity with some of the points they had discussed in the home exam I think it is also important that students get a chance to argue in an oral exam setting. Overall, the grades are quite good but, as can be seen in the 2021 results, on the oral part they are somewhat lower than on the written part. The reason for it is a combination of the more general fact that an oral exam is a source of some stress and requires more spontaneous answers as well as the fact that during a home exam students have access to various sources but some students use them without much reflection.

Learning outcomes and objectives of the Master's program in English

The learning outcomes are formulated in a very general way but they are for the most part well aligned with the teaching forms, learning and the exam form in this course. The generality

of the terms in which the learning outcomes are formulated is a useful way of accommodating various topics dealt with in the course.

The first learning outcome states that:

‘The student has detailed insight into the theoretical and methodological area within the field covered by the course and be familiar with current research in this field.’

The course was devoted to two different areas of linguistics (morphology in 2019 and 2020, and grammaticalization theory in 2021) and throughout the semester the students read about, listened to shorts talks about, and discussed aspects of morphology grammaticalization theory and ways of collecting and analyzing data used in these two kinds of linguistic research.

The next two learning outcomes state that:

‘The student:

- can apply his or her knowledge and skills in teaching, dissemination of research and other information purposes.

- is highly skilled in expressing academic ideas in written and spoken English’

Throughout the course the students had multiple opportunities to express ideas orally in the course of discussions, and also during the project presentations in 2021. As the exam has a written and a spoken part, the students were first evaluated on the ability to formulate the relevant notions, ideas and present data analysis in a written form.

The first learning outcome of the two listed here received the least attention in the course, which, I assume, is a consequence of the fact that topics discussed in ENG349 vary from semester to semester. The course was not specifically directed at future teachers. The students however had the opportunity to gain some experience in disseminating their research by giving an oral presentation of their projects with the aid of a power point.

The last learning outcome states that:

‘The student is capable of developing his or her own competence and specializing in an independent manner.’

In the course of the semester the students developed their own competence by reading and discussing the relevant literature, taking part in discussing relevant cases and examples pertinent to morphological and grammaticalization research and individually, and conducting a small piece of their own data collection and data analysis. The exam also required a description of the students’ individual research in 2021.

The course and the topics chosen this semester sit in well with the objectives of the English Master’s program as described on the UiB websites (<https://www.uib.no/en/studies/MAHF-ENG>). The course helped the students deepen their knowledge about more and less recent

changes in standard English and gave them even more of a theoretical apparatus needed to analyze English language data

Student evaluations

I have based this report on student evaluations going back to spring 2018. The student evaluations have been very consistent. Usually very few students return the evaluation sheets (2-3 people) but they are very satisfied with the course overall and its component parts, i.e. quality of teaching, level of difficulty, progression, the extent to which the learning outcomes were achieved. The students indicate that there was enough information about the course, it was easily available, they say that the progression was very good and consider the content relevant to their studies regardless of the topic. The quality of teaching received a lot of praise as well. In the 2018 evaluation, some students remarked that they would like to discuss more examples of grammaticalization. I took this into account in this run of the course as we looked into many more cases of grammaticalization. I assume that it is also reflected in the 2021 evaluation where a student praises the opportunity to do their own piece of grammaticalization research and where there are no comments pointing to any lack of illustrations of grammaticalization. In 2019 one student expressed dissatisfaction with the form of the exam which 'feel[s] like two different exams'. In light of the good final grades overall and this voice being solitary, there are arguments to say that that this form of exam works well with this course (I addressed more of those arguments in the Exam section above).

Final assessment

Based on the student evaluations, the report by prof. Gjertrud Stenbreden, and the experience of the linguists who have taught the course, I think ENG349 is an important and well executed course in the Master's program offer. The last three runs of the course were quite successful and the fact that the course ran online in 2020 and 2021 didn't take anything away from it. The students were quite motivated, which materialized in very good attendance throughout the semesters, and interested and the teachers succeeded in showing the students how to use what we know about morphology and grammaticalization in data analysis. The learning outcomes, despite the generality in the way they are formulated, function well in the course where topics vary. The students indicate they the learning outcomes are achieved. The experience gained through the teaching of the course in the last three semesters, for example use of pre-recorded videos, accommodation of small research projects which students carry out in the course of the semester, should be used in the future runs of the course.