Hows and Whys: Guidelines for the Japanese Linguistics Ph.D.

PhD students in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature must adhere to (1) the University of Washington's Graduate School regulations, (2) the Department of Asian Languages and Literature policies and procedures, and (3) all program specific regulations.

The information below is meant only as a reference. Final authority in all cases remains with the official regulations.

General Aims

The goal of graduate study is to train students to make original contributions to scholarship in their field. Therefore, the graduate student needs to build a solid awareness of the publications in the field of specialization, the major questions that are being (and could be) researched, as well as the methodology for answering such questions. In addition, the student should have a solid grasp of the broader academic context in which the field of specialization is situated (i.e. "the big picture").

The Japanese Linguistics Program currently offers work in Japanese applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and sociolinguistics. Graduate courses in these areas build upon a foundation of general coursework in Japanese linguistics offered as upper-division undergraduate courses. In consultation with the faculty advisor, students plan a course of study that combines opportunities within the department with the wide range of linguistics and language-related courses offered in departments such as Linguistics, English, Anthropology, and other language and literature departments. The Japanese Linguistics Program is strongly research-oriented, providing students with the opportunity to pursue their own areas of academic interest in Japanese linguistics. Students have, for example, done research in areas such as classroom discourse, language & gender, and second language phonological development. Prospective students should have a high degree of fluency in Japanese and English, including strong literacy skills in both languages.

How to Proceed

The following explains the rationale behind each of the general requirements for Ph.D. students in the department, and outlines the procedure students should follow to satisfy them. It also contains, in bold, the specific rules of the Japanese linguistics program over and above those of the department. Finally, notes in boxes are explanations, examples, and additional commentary.

1. Meeting with the Advisor

Each new student is assigned an interim advisor, that is, a graduate faculty member with whom the student can discuss the course of his/her study in the initial stages. Upon arrival, the student should meet as soon as possible with the interim advisor to chart a plan of course work; subsequently the student should meet quarterly with the advisor to keep him/her apprised of his/her progress. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate these meetings, and the advisor's responsibility to file a formal progress report once a year. Once the student has determined, in consultation with the interim advisor, his/her area of specialization and the faculty member with whom he/she would like to work, the student should approach that faculty member. If the faculty member agrees to advise the student, he/she will file a form appointing that professor as his/her faculty advisor. Students are required to appoint a faculty advisor by the end of their second quarter of graduate study.
2. Filing a Program of Study

The student should carefully plan a program of study that will contribute to achieving the skills mentioned above, including a detailed timetable, keeping in mind that many courses are not offered every year and that some courses will not be offered when faculty are on leave. Ideally, students should take at least one course with every faculty member in their program in order to familiarize themselves with the full range of scholarship and expertise available to them.

By the third quarter of graduate study, the student should submit a feasible proposal of study to the advisor, which, after approval, will be filed by the department secretary. The plan of study should be viewed as a guideline rather than a straitjacket; specifics of the plan are likely to change as the student proceeds, but the general course of study should be clear.

There is a minimum course requirement of 90 credits (45 of which must be taken before pre-candidacy), and the student must take classes and examinations relating to both the linguistic and literary aspects of the language of specialization. Classes in other disciplines (e.g., religion or anthropology) might also be recommended depending on the student's chosen field of specialization.

The student's file contains a checklist of the required courses in his/her program and the student is responsible for checking off each requirement as it is completed. When all courses are taken, the student should present the completed list to the Program Coordinator and ask him/her (or his/her designated representative) to sign off the box "course work completed" on the checklist. If there are any irregularities (such as course substitutions), an explanation will be placed in the file along with the signature.

Please note that each graduate student is required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA.

No student enters the department in the Ph.D. program. Please note that fulfillment of the credit requirements does not automatically ensure admission to the Ph.D. program. All students must be formally admitted to pre-candidacy by the faculty in their program.

3.a. Students with an MA from this Department

Students with an MA from this Department cannot automatically assume successful admission into the Ph.D. program. A student who would like to enter the Ph.D. program must file a "Petition to Proceed." (See item 4, below.)

3.b. Students with an MA from another University or in another area

Students with an MA from another University or in another area than the one to be pursued will first need to fulfill the following requirements before petitioning to proceed.

1. The student must complete at least 45 relevant graduate credits at the UW.

2. The student must prepare for and pass the additional language requirement. In consultation with the advisor, the student selects a language relevant to his/her program of study and files a plan for achieving the necessary level of competence in this language. In the language plan, the student should outline the reasons for choosing this second language and a time schedule detailing how the student intends to prepare to fulfill this requirement. The requirement may be satisfied by taking a reading exam in the Department or by taking classes up to a certain level of proficiency. The language plan must be approved by the advisor and added to the student's file no later than the third quarter of graduate study.

3. Except when the student has undergone a comparable MA examination in a comparable program, the student also needs to pass the departmental MA General Examination. This is a written test, consisting of two two-hour exams to be taken in the same week. The
The purpose of the general exam is to establish the student's general competence in the field. The advisor will suggest which steps should be taken by the student to prepare for the exam. In some cases, a student may be advised to take the Department's general examination even when he/she has passed a comparable exam elsewhere, in order to strengthen the student's petition to proceed.

4. Petitioning to Proceed

Graduate students wishing to enter the Ph.D. program must file a "Petition to Proceed." The petition should demonstrate to the program faculty the student's ability to pursue the Ph.D., i.e. to make a meaningful contribution of original research to the field. This document should highlight the student's accomplishments (MA thesis or papers, exam papers, transcript of graduate courses, other preparation for research, honors) as well as indicate future direction (study and language plan, proposed four fields and dissertation topic and scope). It should also include a time schedule. If the petition is successful, the student becomes a Pre-candidate.

5. From Pre-candidate to Candidate: Four Fields and the General Exam

The Pre-candidate engages in further course work (minimum 45 credits) as established in the study plan.

The following are examples of applicable linguistics courses. Japanese Linguistics coursework offered in the Department: JAPAN 440, Japanese Linguistics; JAPAN 443, Topics in Japanese Sociolinguistics; ASIAN 503, Seminar in Asian Linguistics (changing topics course, can be repeated for credit); JAPAN 540, Seminar in Japanese Linguistics (changing topics course, can be repeated for credit); ASIAN 510/518, Teaching Methodology for Asian Languages; ASIAN 600, Independent Study or Research. Some examples of coursework offered in other departments: ENGL 432 (5) Sociolinguistics; ENGL 471 (5) The Composition Process; ENGL 478 (5) Language and Social Policy; ENGL 479 (5) Lang. Variation and Social Policy in North America; ENGL 560 (5) Nature of Language; ENGL 561 (5) Stylistics; ENGL 562 (5) Introduction to Discourse Analysis; ENGL 563 (5) Comparative Grammars; ENGL 564 (5) Current Rhetorical Theory; ENGL 569 (5) Topics in Language and Rhetoric; ENGL 571 (5) Colloquium: Theory and Practice of TESOL; ENGL 574 (5) Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition; ENGL 576 (5) Testing and Evaluation in English as a Second Language; ENGL 578 (5) TESOL Colloquium; ANTH 464 Language Politics and Cultural Identity; ANTH 553 Analysis of Linguistic Structures; LING 400 Survey of Linguistic Method and Theory; LING 402 Survey of the History of Linguistics; LING 420 Quantitative methods for Linguists; LING 432/ANTH 432 Sociolinguistics I; LING 433/Anth 464 Language Policy and Cultural Identity; LING 433/ANTH 464 Language Politics and Cultural Identity; LING 434/ANTH 433 Sociolinguistics II; LING 444 Philosophy of Language-Pragmatics; LING 447 Psychology of Language II; LING 447/Psych 457 (4) Language Development; LING 450 Introduction to Linguistic Phonetics; LING 451,452,453 Phonology I, II, III; LING 457 Language Development; LING 458/ANTH 450 Language and Gender; LING 461, 462, 463 Syntax I, II, III; LING 480 Topics in Linguistics; LING 550, 551, 552 Advanced Phonology; LING 561, 562, 563 Advanced Syntax; SLAV 425 Ways of Meaning: Universal and Culture Specific Aspects of Language; SLAV 426 Ways of Feeling: Expressions of Emotions Across Languages and Cultures

In addition, he/she works towards fulfilling a second additional language requirement, as established in the language plan. The student should select his course work such that he/she acquires a solid foundation in the field and builds expertise in an area of specialization, as well as prepares for the field exams. The four fields represent areas of specialization but also span the broader range of the program area. The purpose is to assure that the student develops into a broadly versatile scholar. In order to maintain this broad range, linguistics students should have at least one field in literature, and literature students should have at least one field in language. Each field is supervised by a faculty member; one of the fields can be taken outside the department. Fields must be approved by the student's academic advisor.

Possible fields include areas within Japanese linguistics and applied linguistics (such as discourse analysis, second language acquisition, syntax, sociolinguistics, etc.) and literature. Each field exam normally consists of an academic paper, which students develop from work done in courses or independent study.

Early on, the nature and scope of the field exams should be discussed and arranged with the main advisor and the individual field advisors, who together constitute the student’s supervisory committee. This committee will also oversee the General Examination, which again is intended to demonstrate the student's general knowledge of his/her program area. By the quarter prior to the exam date, the
student should meet with the advisor to discuss exam preparation. In preparation for this meeting, the student should compile a list of classes taken and readings completed, so as to give the advisor a good idea of what the student already knows and what needs more work. On the basis of this information, an effective strategy for exam preparation can be devised. Once the student passes the general examination, he/she becomes a Candidate.

6. From PhC to PhD: Writing the Dissertation

Officially, the student begins work on the dissertation only after passing the General Examination. It is advisable, however, to start thinking about a topic of specialization and discussing it with the advisor before this time, and to start working on it as soon as feasible.

The PhD dissertation should make an original contribution to existing research in the student's field and present it in a coherent scholarly form. In this department, demonstrating the ability to work with primary sources in the language of specialization is a requirement of the dissertation.

In practical terms this means that the graduate student will go through a study process to familiarize him- or herself with the publications in the field of specialization, the major questions that are being (and could be) researched, and the methodological approaches to answering such questions. The end product of this process, the dissertation itself, demonstrates the mastery of these materials and approaches. The PhD dissertation differs from the MA thesis in that it is broader in scope. It is similar to a book in length and scope, while the MA thesis is comparable to a lengthy scholarly article.

Before beginning to write the dissertation, the Candidate should select an informal reading committee and provide the members with a prospectus of the dissertation (topic, state of the field, student's contribution, resources to be used) and a time schedule. The student is to send yearly (or more frequent, if appropriate) progress reports to the members and should meet regularly with the advisor, submitting drafts for comments. It is advisable to consult early on the graduate school guidelines for formatting and to make sure the dissertation complies with these rigid stipulations. Once the dissertation is nearing completion, the committee is formalized (usually the quarter before the final examination). The committee consists of three members, two of whom should be in this department; in addition, the graduate school appoints a GSR, who will oversee the procedure, and needs to be consulted about the scheduling of the examination. Usually this committee is the same as the supervisory committee. The student should give each member an abstract of the dissertation. The complete draft should be given to the committee six (or eight, if the committee members so require) weeks before the final examination. The Final Examination is an oral defense of the dissertation before the committee and the general public. The final version of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School by the last day of the quarter of graduation.

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