A Review of a Final Thesis

submitted to the Department of English and ELT Methodology,
Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Name and titles of the reviewer: Mgr. Kateřina Vašků, PhD
Reviewed as: ☒ a supervisor   ☐ an opponent

Author of the thesis: Bc. Klára Divišová
Title of the thesis: *Multi-word Verbs in Speech of Native and Non-native Speakers of English*
Year of submission: 2020
Submitted as: ☐ a bachelor's thesis   ☒ a master's thesis

Level of expertise:
☐ excellent ☒ very good ☐ average ☐ below average ☐ inadequate

Factual errors:
☐ almost none   ☒ appropriate to the scope of the thesis   ☐ frequent less serious   ☐ serious

Chosen methodology:
☐ original and appropriate   ☒ appropriate   ☐ barely adequate   ☐ inadequate

Results:
☒ original   ☐ original and derivative   ☐ non-trivial compilation   ☐ cited from sources   ☐ copied

Scope of the thesis:
☐ too large   ☒ appropriate to the topic   ☐ adequate   ☐ inadequate

Bibliography (number and selection of titles):
☒ above average (scope or rigor) ☐ average   ☐ below average   ☐ inadequate

Typographical and formal level:
☐ excellent   ☒ very good   ☐ average   ☐ below average   ☐ inadequate

Language:
☐ excellent   ☒ very good   ☐ average   ☐ below average   ☐ inadequate

Typos:
☐ almost none   ☒ appropriate to the scope of the thesis   ☐ numerous

Overall evaluation of the thesis:
☐ excellent   ☒ very good   ☐ average   ☐ below average   ☐ inadequate

Brief description of the thesis (by the supervisor, ca. 100-200 words):
The MA thesis submitted by Klára Divišová explores the use of multi-word verbs in the language of advanced Czech learners of English. The study is based on data retrieved from two comparable corpora of spoken language, LINDSEI Czech (L2) and LOCNEC (L1). The data used for final analysis include 170 types / 622 tokens in the L2 sample and 245 types / 1153 tokens in the L1 sample. The verbs included in the study were classified according to their subtype of MWV (phrasal, prepositional or phrasal-prepositional verbs) and the samples were compared in terms of frequencies of each subtype, but also frequencies of individual verbs. The results indicate that Czech speakers of English tend to underuse phrasal verbs while the use of prepositional verbs does not differ significantly in the two groups. In addition, the study has identified three "phrasal teddy-bears", i.e. lexemes used more frequently and in more contexts by L2 speakers than by L1 speakers. They include verbs *find out, talk about* and *look forward to*.

Review, comments and notes (ca. 100-200 words)
Strong points of the thesis:
The theoretical background is presented clearly, starting with the general linguistic aspects of the study (MWV classification, the problems of their identification and the tests used for this purpose presented in literature) and then proceeding to the applied linguistics research of phrasal verbs in L2 language.
In my opinion, one of the most important contributions of the thesis is the compilation of the samples. The author processed, to a large extent manually, thousands of tokens retrieved by the query, with the aim to distinguish multi-verb words from free combinations of verbs with adverbs/prepositions. It is precisely this manual analysis that enables us to combine the advantages of both traditional and distributional approach to phraseology. Thanks to this extensive manual analysis, the study provides a first insight into the use of phrasal verbs by Czech advanced students of English, confirming the expectations of the phrasal verbs underuse in this group of speakers, but also suggesting that prepositional verbs do not follow the same pattern as phrasal verbs in this aspect.

Weak points of the thesis:
The quantitative data should be discussed in terms of either absolute (provided the corpora are comparable in size) or normalized frequency, not both (especially in the cases when they differ, the discussion of these small differences in unnecessary and confusing, particularly in Conclusions, p. 64). In addition, it should be taken into account that the corpora are small and the number of MWV which occurred frequently enough to draw any relevant conclusions about their use is rather low.

Questions to answer during the Defence and suggested points of discussion:
How did you count the "normalized frequency of speakers"?
Have you come across any erroneous uses of MWV by L2 users?

Proposed grade:
☒ excellent ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:
Prague,