



FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University

Department of English and ELT Methodology

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: doc. Mgr. Radek Skarnitzl, Ph.D.

Reviewed as: a supervisor an opponent

Author of the thesis: Roksolana Fedorenko

Title of the thesis: *Phonetic Aspects of Fluency in Read and Spontaneous Speech*

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 thesis represents quite a rare study in that it compares speech performance of English and American Studies students at the onset of their university studies (read speech) and several years later (spontaneous conversation). The second chapter introduces prosodic patterning and the concept of fluency and linking in more detail. The analysis is based on eight speakers and focuses on two connected speech phenomena, linking and phrasing. In linking, general and speaker-specific results are presented using absolute and relative bar plots; they reveal a greater tendency to link in the later, spontaneous recording than in the earlier read speech. The analysis of phrasing concentrates on whether prosodic boundaries are placed logically, on phrase length and speech rate. Phrases are shown to be somewhat longer and their speech rate more uniform, with more boundaries placed logically in the read speech.

Review, comments and notes (ca. 100-200 words)

Strong points of the thesis:

The thesis based on quite a lot of speech material, and the analyses were rather time-consuming. The presentation of the results is systematic and straightforward, using illustrative graphical displays.

Weak points of the thesis:

In some passages of the theoretical chapters, the writing does not present as a coherent text, it does not flow very well; in others it is slightly repetitive or redundant, sometimes also contradictory (this concerns, for instance, the relationship between speech rate in one's L1 and L2 on p. 11, or the introductory paragraph of section 2.2). On page 22, the conditions for the occurrence of the glottal stop are quoted from Hieke; however, since terms like *absorption phenomena* and *plus juncture* are not explained, this description will not be very useful to most readers. Finally, I would advise against using the word *significant* when presenting the results, unless significance is confirmed by a statistical test.

Questions to answer during the Defence and suggested points of discussion:

The two types of analyzed material differ in two aspects, temporal and stylistic. This is not really addressed in the discussion on p. 35 (although hinted at in the general discussion on p. 42). How would you expect linking to differ if both samples contained only read speech, and only spontaneous speech?

Other comments:

Proposed grade:

excellent very good good fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Prague, August 21, 2020