



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:

Reviewed as:  a supervisor  an opponent

Author of the thesis: *Veronika Hubinová*

Title of the thesis: *Motivation in ELT of Advanced Learners*

Year of submission: 2022

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



**Brief description of the thesis** (by the supervisor, ca. 100-200 words):

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

The thesis investigates motivation to improve high-proficiency L2 English in two cohorts of learners. A survey study was administered, followed by a smaller sample of interviews. The quantitative aspect of the study is a bit underdeveloped; however, the qualitative aspect yielded quite intriguing results. Even though the thesis has some methodological shortcomings, it was well written, interesting to read, and provided some good insights into the learning experience of the two groups, especially with regards to the role of teachers in high-proficiency learning.

**Strong points of the thesis:**

The introduction provides a thorough overview of different theories on L2 motivation and the described concepts are well linked to the methodology used for the study. Even though I have some reservations about the survey questions (see below), the insights gleaned from the interviews are very interesting and can illuminate motivational biases in the two groups.

The conclusions are exceptionally exciting: the discussion of the teacher's role in further advancement of high-proficiency English is very interesting. When reading the results of the thesis, I thought that students' perceptions of what the teachers should do in order to provide motivation for learning was the most exciting finding. Other points discussed in the conclusion section are also highly relevant.

**Weak points of the thesis:**

A number of questions asked in the survey may have been rather vague and difficult to answer for the respondents. I have not seen the whole survey (maybe it was uploaded separately on SIS and I didn't see it?) but from what I could infer from the text, at least some of the questions could have been more specific. For instance, the example sentences given on page 40 ("*I feel demotivated because of my past failures and mistakes. I feel demotivated because of someone who is better than me. I feel motivated when I am given praise for my English.*") are questions that any sane and honest person would answer with a definitive "strongly agree". It is always tricky to ask people about their cognitive mindsets because most people are not *consciously* aware of their own cognitive biases. It would have been better to ask for specific actions and events taken by a respondent (a proxy variable) that you then relate to their underlying cognition. The question mentioned on p. 57 about "surrounding oneself with people that motivate one to improve English" is a good example of my point: this is a really complicated question from a cognitive viewpoint. People don't think about themselves and their friends as "motivators" – most people don't rationalize friendships in such an instrumental way, even if we subconsciously choose friends based on this instrumental motivation. When you ask someone this question, the answers tend to be unreliable. You could have asked about the level of English of the friends, or how hard the friends work on improving their English, or how often someone studies with their friends, etc. This may have given you a better idea of how motivational the friends are.

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

1. What do you think are the most relevant findings of your study for teachers, and how can they define their role in the context of high-proficiency learning?



2. Briefly explain the concept of “native-likeness” in SLA research and your own study. How important was it for your respondents, and what were its motivational consequences impacting the students’ learning experience?

**Other comments:**

The concept of “native-like” proficiency on page 10 could have been explored more. Not all learners are motivated by that and the concept itself is debated in SLA. As the term continues to be used throughout in the thesis (e.g. page 13), it would have been appropriate to discuss the scientific controversy a bit.

The research questions could have been formulated better; some are unclear: did you expect that highly advanced English learners would NOT keep working on their English? Maybe the question of how many of them feel motivated to improve and what they are willing to do to improve would have made more sense. In a similar vein, how do you distinguish between “maintaining” and “improving” English? This seems relevant to me, especially in light of some of the results of your study.

You write on p. 39: “It was probable that some respondents (most likely EM respondents) would like to opt for the neutral item in case of not wanting to report the true facts,”  
→ Have you considered that they may not be consciously aware of their intentions/motivations? This is related to my previous comment on proxy variables to understand cognition.

On page 40: Regarding the question “I feel motivated by my peers’ success” – it probably depends on who that person is. Few people feel motivated by a random classmate’s success but that may be different if it is a friend. The question, like many others, could have been qualified further.

Because of the vagueness of some of your questions you received answers like “*Half of the EM respondents agreed that the source of their motivation was to study at the university on which they are right now and this field of English studies*” (p. 50). It seems to me that it may not have been the point of your study to find out that English students work on their English. This question could have been explored further with more specific questions on motivations and intentions. I would say the same for answers like “*A surprising number of responses contained the mention of “love for the languages” (7) or just generally being interested in the English language*” (p. 53). In my view, there is nothing surprising here: high-proficiency learners/ users of a language generally like that language. You just didn’t manage to get to the actual motivational factors that causes those interests because your questions were too unspecific.

**Minor comments:**

- p. 21: “foreigner” is an odd term in L2 research.
- p. 31: countries with less mixed cultures – what is meant by mixed culture?
- Some research questions are grammatically odd (e.g., 2 and 4).



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- Question 4 has a colored background. The same for the section 5.1.4. and other sections throughout the later parts of the thesis. Maybe the PDF conversion caused this formatting issue.
- p. 53, Figure 4: what does “want to comprehend” mean?
- p. 58, Figure 8: “contact with natives” sound strange
- p. 63: typing mistake “The NEM participants, Tereza H. and Barbora V.8, both have been studying an English major at university for more than three years”. I assume they are EM participants.

**Proposed grade:**

excellent  very good  good  fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

*Prague,*

*August 30, 2022*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Lana'.