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. Veronika Hlaváčková
Reviewed as: ☐ a supervisor ☒ an opponent

Author of the thesis: Gleb Vorobev
Title of the thesis: *Alternation of synthetic and analytic comparative in spoken English*
Year of submission: 2024
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)
Strong points of the thesis:

Given the limited scope of a bachelor's thesis, the author manages to investigate a significantly large amount of data, whether it is the wider sample examining the effects of internal factors on the formation of the comparative, or the smaller sample analysing the influence of external factors. Additionally, the determinants considered in the analysis span across multiple linguistic domains, including phonology, morphology, and syntax, and are also extensive in number. One notable contribution is the comparison of results derived from the spoken variety of the language with findings from the written variety, as these two forms carry implications that play an important role in the alternation between synthetic and analytic comparatives.

Weak points of the thesis:

Although the samples are considerably large, the author himself points out drawbacks in the methodology, specifically the dataset compilation, which have affected the results (though the motives are understandable). In the analytical section, the frequency data sometimes appears misleading. For example, in relation to the number of syllables in adjectives, i.e. one of the phonological determinants, the absolute frequencies provided may not adequately illustrate the preference for synthetic or analytic comparatives. Including relative frequencies would be more advisable, as some adjectives are substantially more common or have a strong preference for one form of the comparative over the other (possibly due to a different determinant). Furthermore, there are several inconsistencies in the formal aspects and references of the thesis that slightly impede the readability.

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

Beyond its size, what other aspects of Spoken BNC2014 could have influenced your results?

What are the motivations for the double marking of the comparative/superlative?

Have you found any examples of the comparative in the predicative position where the adjective complements the object instead of the subject?

Other comments:

In the wider sample, it might be beneficial to consider the semantics of the adjectives, as some of them have multiple distinct meanings. This could help determine whether the preference for synthetic or analytic comparatives is also influenced by the semantics of the adjective.

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

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:
Prague,