

## Bachelor Thesis Review

**Name:** Klara Pechakova

**Title:** Teacher's Perspective on Classroom Interaction

Mis.. Pechakova has focused her bachelor thesis on the teacher's perspective on classroom interaction.. She sets up the thesis in the introduction that it will be focusing on the teacher and the Czech learners in the classroom. She herself feels it is a valid topic to do her bachelor work on because as she states, not all teachers "create a good environment in the class."(P.6) I think a more appropriate adjective would be "positive." In the first paragraph of the introduction this is an example of the poor use of language that is to follow throughout the bachelor thesis. It immediately sets a poor impression for the reader regarding the deficiency of the level of competency regarding the use of language throughout the bachelor thesis. On the same page "I will research and diagnose" if the teachers are giving the learners the exact instructions to work and communicate." Again, the proper term would be "determine." : "diagnose" is a term reserved for doctors and other such established professionals.

On p 8 "When we want to communicate we need one more person" shows multiple negative transfers from Czech to English and as stated above a lack of professionalism as to the use of expression for this thesis. The errors due to lack of proper knowledge to continue but to list them all would be redundant since the reader need not look far to find them.

In the theoretical part she describes verbal communication and then goes on to describe the basics of communication. My personal feeling is that this and the following sections on the student and teacher along with the following section on classroom interaction are written in such a superficial manner, although supported by citations that the reader can figure out the information on his own without necessarily giving the information any deep thought. Sentences such as: "Harmer also states that people communicate because they want to say something(.p.8) Harmer states that there is a need or a desire for the communication of both the speaker and listener." "Optimal situation is when the learners are not afraid of speaking and at the same time they are able to express something without serious mistakes." In the perfect world this may be true but how and where her thesis does Miss. Pechackova explain how to even come close to this opimal idea?

On P. 12 She writes "In the previous chapters the phenomenon of communication was examined. " How is communcation, a natural act between animal species as well as insects a phenomenon? This is also never explained. Further On p. 13 She writes "the textbook is the transmitter of the messge." Personally I considered the teacher the transmitter but she does not make it clear what the message is. Is it the textbook material? Is the textbook trying to communicate something in a subjective nature? The problem I see with much of the content on the theoretical section is not only is it general and obvious, but these generalizations are either incorrect, mis-interpreted, unexplained or not examined in enough depth. This leaves the reader with a sense of wonder why they are included if not explained thoroughly enough. As a result it is difficult to see how these

unsubstantiated comments beyond the general style in which they are written relates to the main purpose of the thesis

She continues with Section 3.2 on p.16 with the comment “In my opinion, the worst thing which can happen in the class is the boredom.” The worst thing that can happen in a class is the students don’t learn effectively. Boredom is a state of being. The students could be bored as she states for a variety of reasons, as she states. Boredom is a factor but it also depends on the mood of the class, time of day, tiredness, the willingness of the students to participate, etc. I consider this a generalization which needs to be looked at from both sides, not only her personal experience which may support it.

In the next section she explains different types of grouping arrangements such as Whole Class Work on p. 19. As with the earlier sections she never goes beyond a general explanation “whole class work usually proceeds from some other activities like group work or pair work and it usually forms a debate or discussion.” I think more specifics and more detail could have gone into this sections with examples used rather than limiting it to general information. and seems to have inserted it as a contrast but yet little explanation is given to the central purpose of the thesis.

In the practical section she claims she will deal with the classroom interaction in practice. Here she uses as a primary source of information information sheets collected from colleagues. My question is if the bachelor thesis is hers and hers alone, in contrast to a survey where opinions are collected and tabulated, should she have not observed the lessons herself? How is it possible to trust her colleagues opinions when the task of observation belongs to Miss Pechackova? With the past research reports I have read I question the validity of her research methods. As she claims she will analyze the content of the sheets: “Time was spent on teacher’s questions at the beginning of the lesson.” “At the beginning of the lesson the teacher can spend some time giving the instructions, explaining new grammar or checking homework but in my opinion it should not last more than 5-7 minutes.’ Where is the analysis in this statement? I read only a short description of the lesson and reference to time management. She also writes on P. 24 “All these observations took place at lower secondary level and 5 colleagues did not complete this line at all. It could prefigure that not much pair work is done but without the teacher’s intervention.” Why did she not ask the colleagues why this line was not filled in so as to get a concrete answer? I consider this a lack of professionalism in the area of research techniques and relying on perhaps inaccurate generalizations. On p 25 She states :”When the teacher sets the rules of pair work and when he or she monitors this activity it should no problem and after some time they realize that it is beneficial for both parties.” How does she know this will be the case? For teachers like myself who have over the past 20 years taught pre-school, primary school and secondary school students along with adults this comment taken at face value can be interpreted from a practitioner as not only unsubstantiated but also naïve. This is an assumption and should be avoided in academic works unless supported by evidence. This assumption is subjective and is not based on personal experience and therefore decreases the level of the thought put into the statements written. She also writes on p. 25 that “When I was at grammar school we were asked to make pairs quite a lot and I have to admit that it was something like free time for us.” I would have responded to this statement by asking what place does her

personal reflection of her grammar school days have in an academic work of this sort? Her personal experience, if included, should be backed up by data or the opinions of other scholars to show that her personal experience has relevance in the purpose of her thesis and not simply inserted for reflection on her own comments. Her comments by Ur and Harmer in the same section would require a page number for citations.

For the purposes of academic validity the even partially completed observation sheets should have been included into the index or at least some kind of official tabulation would have been appropriate. Beyond repeating what she has done what pedagogical implications can we draw from her research? Without such concrete evidence of research, how is the reader able to verify the results of her study. Her personal observations from her own experience are subjective so again she should have supported these observations with some expert quotations to show that her experience is not an isolated incident and does or does not represent the current situation regarding student/teacher interaction. She should have interviewed the teacher and at least gotten her personal views on the class to offer a balanced unbiased opinion. Additionally, Since the observation sheets are the primary source of her data(p.28-32)It is my opinion that these observations, which are simply descriptions of what went on the class and her views of it do not possess enough academic value standing alone. Since Ms. Pechackova and her colleagues are not teachers, academic support from other sources are required to support her views. These views are subjective but in another light it is very similar to describing the weather. Some would find rain pleasant and sentimental, others would find sunny days too hot and uncomfortable. What is really missing in the practical part is more academic support for her views so that they represent well-founded beliefs and not hers alone.

Taken all this together, the general nature of the bachelor thesis, the questionable research methods along with the insufficient proficiency I recommend a (4) “unsatisfactory” for a final mark for this bachelor thesis.

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