

Stefanie Morejón, ELF in Europe and Asia: teaching policy on the ground

MA Thesis

Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky, FFUK, září 2017

Thesis report – posudek oponenta

Stefanie Morejón has chosen for her thesis the topic of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and decided to explore it from the perspective of those who are most intimately involved in its very existence – its users and its teachers. The topic is among some of the most pressing ones in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), and the author of the thesis exploits her own expertise of a qualified EFL teacher with many years of experience. She aims to make a contribution to the way the concept of ELF is understood by ELF users and teachers so that pedagogical implications can be drawn. This is a worthwhile enterprise as the field, despite more than a couple of decades of being in the limelight, has still not put forward many concrete suggestions in this respect.

The thesis has a standard structure, and is roughly divided into four parts: theoretical background, methodology, presentation of results and their analysis and implications. The theoretical part competently maps sociolinguistic aspects of the use of English as a contact language or lingua franca. The author uses a reasonably wide selection of key sources and manages to construct a logically linked text which is both readable and informative. At the same time, the author manages to connect some of the ideas to her own experience and present a critical evaluation where necessary. Whilst the text appears logical and well organized, it is not always clear how the selected topics are related to the research questions. This part of the thesis is thus more of a textbook-type text about ELF than a true background for the research problem.

The following part deals with the description of the chosen research method and procedures. The author successfully demonstrates that she has done her research not only on the topic of ELF but also on linguistic fieldwork and research methods. The outcome is, however, rather too detailed in places. What we do not learn is whether the data has been anonymized and which techniques (e.g. open coding?) the author used for the analysis of the obtained data. To answer her research questions the author chooses a qualitative design. Would a quantitative approach not have suited the nature of the research questions more? Why was the choice not justified in the thesis?

The data is presented in the form of small case studies which are clearly laid out and the author manages to pinpoint the key features related to her research and analyze them in some detail. The resulting picture offers a medley of life stories and experiences affected by life with English, all of which show just how varied and multi-faceted the reality of ELF is. Whilst the author identifies some of the key pedagogical concerns through the analysis of her own data, the final message rings many bells that have been heard before. This appears to be the problem with so much ELF related research: despite its long history and seemingly clear implications very few concrete steps have actually been proposed let alone put into practice.

The strong features of the thesis include the following: logical structure of the text; competently written literature review; critical evaluation of many of the sources; high standard of proof-reading; good synthesis of key points appearing in the interviews; and sensible pedagogical implications.

The research questions listed in the thesis proposal "Zásady pro vypracování práce (anotace)" are only partly answered. (And, by the way, how are they answered in literature?) But this is perhaps hardly surprising given the chosen research method which has only allowed to collect opinions and experiences of a handful of individuals. The thesis would have benefited from a stricter narrowing down of the research problem. The research questions in the proposal do not entirely match the aims explicitly stated in the thesis (i.e. "to ascertain how real-world ELF users employ linguistic and pragmatic strategies [...] whether consciously or unconsciously"). I would also appreciate it if the author had made it clearer if any research similar to her own already exists and how its results compare with those of her own.

The thesis is well edited with only a handful of typos, which I have entered in the copy I was working with. A number of titles the author was working with are, however, missing in the bibliography.

I feel the author has proved the ability to construct a well-structured academic text and carry out a research project but that in doing so she occasionally lost sight of her initial aims. I also feel that quantitative design triangulated by the actual case studies presented in the thesis would have suited the research questions to a much greater degree.

In the light of what I have written above, I find that Stefanie Morejon has fulfilled the criteria for being awarded a pass for her MA thesis but in the light of its weaker parts I suggest a final grade for the viva between **velmi dobře** and **dobře**.

PhDr. Tomáš Gráf, Ph.D.
30 August, 2017