



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: Luca Cilibrasi, PhD

Reviewed as: a supervisor an opponent

Author of the thesis: Daniela Marková

Title of the thesis: The acquisition of preposition through gaming

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 presents a purposely developed videogame aimed at training primary school children in the use of English prepositions. The first part of the thesis presents the theories of language acquisition that are used as a baseline, the second part presents the actual videogame design and the third part presents an experimental study where the validity of the game is assessed on a group of 20 children in primary school. The data analysis shows that the game does have a beneficial effect on children's learning.

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

This is a very original thesis, where the student showed an impressive independence (she didn't receive any training for the creation of the game). While completing this work, the student demonstrated a great ability to juggle various tasks and thus the presence of different skills: the technical skills required to create a videogame, the research competence required to assess a relatively large group of children in schools, and the theoretical skills required to devise a game that actually offers learning opportunity to children. This thesis is a courageous piece of work, and a great example of multidisciplinary.

Strong points of the thesis:

The videogame itself is an amusing product: The storyline, the dialogues, the tasks, are all a brilliant balance of theoretical relevance and captivating script. The thesis is well connected with theoretical issues important for the field. Even if the discussion on this topic is not fully developed (probably because this reflection emerged at a late stage of revision), the thesis offers some evidence for the positive role of repetition in second language acquisition, a role generally defended in usage-based theories and neglected in generative theories.

Weak points of the thesis:

The main weakness of this study is the lack of a control group in the experimental part of the thesis. Children tested in this study did not receive any training with prepositions during the time between pre and post assessment, so the candidate can safely conclude that the game was beneficial for learning. However, having a control group where children were presented with a more traditional form of learning could have told us if the game is any better than traditional teaching or not. In other words, the thesis as it is shows that the game is beneficial for learning, but it does not show whether is better than more traditional approaches to learning. It should be stressed that post-assessment took place at the edge of the Coronavirus pandemic, so it certainly would not have been easy to add a control group.



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

I encourage the student to bring her laptop at the defence and show to the commission some of the features and tasks of her game, since the pictures on the thesis don't give it justice.

Other comments:

The candidate did an excellent job with this thesis and I propose grade 1.

Proposed grade:

excellent very good good fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Prague, 24-08-2020

duša Čubík