



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:** Luca Cilibrasi, PhD

**Reviewed as:**  a supervisor  an opponent

**Author of the thesis:** Vlastislav Ryšavý

**Title of the thesis:** Variant Alternation of expressing the predicate in dependent imperative clauses: a corpus study

**Year of submission:** 2021

**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):

NA

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

This thesis tackles two issues: 1) it investigates preferences in the use of dependent imperative clauses in legal texts, comparing the choice of indicative, subjunctive and putative should. 2) it explores whether the preferences are different in English texts translated from French, under the hypothesis that the obligatory use of subjunctive in French will increase the use of subjunctive in English. The thesis is interesting and methodologically sound in most of its components. Results are mixed regarding point 1 – where there was no clear prediction – and they are mostly not compatible with the hypothesis from point 2.

***Strong points of the thesis:***

The theoretical background is thorough and completed with great attention to detail. The rationale for the thesis is interesting, and I find particularly attractive the idea of investigating whether translated text carries features from the language of the original text, biasing choices on constructions.

***Weak points of the thesis:***

The data analysis is quite rudimentary, which makes the conclusions rather weak. There is no statistical analysis, the entire “quantitative” analysis is really just an “intuitive” comparison of percentages. The ambiguity in some of the counts makes it even less reliable, leaving the reader with a feeling of the findings, but no certainty about any claim.

Other minor weaknesses are:

No specification as to whether your corpus is American or British English, after you explained in detail that these two varieties are expected to differ considerably. Since the corpus is EUR-LEX should we assume that we are looking at British English? It would have been good to state this explicitly in the methods section.

The use of the “editorial we” is quite odd in some parts, see for example, page 61: “based on our experience as a French translation student, we believe this parallelism of verb forms can be proven using similar-sounding constructions in both languages “.

In four different occasions you say that the use of the verb *to be* is “excessive”. Such a statement does not belong in a linguistics thesis, since we are only concerned with description (not judgment of what should be done instead). Maybe you meant something like “extensive”?



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

French is relatively poor inflectionally in comparison to other romance languages, but it still relies on a much higher number of inflectional morphemes than English. Subjunctive in French partly mirrors indicative, but only at the singular, and there are also several frequent verbs with unique subjunctive bound morphemes. In English, subjunctive is “simpler” and it is expressed with verbs in infinitive form. In short, French subjunctive is very different from English subjunctive. Do you think that this could have played a role in your results? I would appreciate if you also gave a cognitive explanation for this finding (explain why a translator may not be keen on using subjunctive in English even if the French text was in subjunctive).

***Other comments:***

This is an interesting work, and despite some limitations, I believe the candidate did an excellent job and I propose a grade one or two, to be decided at the defence.

**Proposed grade:**

excellent    very good    good    fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Prague, 2-09-2021

*Lucia Chutkan*