

Graduate Thesis Assessment Rubric (Methodology, Linguistics)
 Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: **Tereza Pecková**

Title: *Language advisory: Tips and advice for effective language learning - speaking skills*

Length: 78 pages

Text Length: 49 pages

| Assessment Criteria | Scale | Comments |
|--|---|-----------------|
| 1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the problem. It places the problem in context. It presents an overview of the thesis. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 2. Literature review is comprehensive and complete. It synthesizes a variety of sources and provides context for the research. It shows the author's understanding of the most relevant literature on the subject matter. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 3. The methodology chapter provides clear and thorough description of the research methodology. It discusses why and what methods were chosen for research. The research methodology is appropriate for the identified research questions. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 4. The results/data are analyzed and interpreted effectively. The chapter ties the theory with the findings. It addresses the applications and implications of the research. It discusses strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the research. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 5. The thesis shows critical and analytical thinking about the area of study and the author's expertise in this area. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author demonstrates high quality writing skills and uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |
| 7. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided. | Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient | |

Comments

The work is diligently researched and for the most part well written, though some of the direct quotations seem unnecessarily long (for example, law on p. 3 or the lists on pp. 19-20); moreover, much of the theoretical background appears to deal with functions of learning in general rather than the specific issue of speaking skills.

Questions

1. What is meant by "the disturbance by unavoidable noise caused by speaking"? (p. 22)
2. What actually constitutes "speaking"? On p. 40 the author offers participation in online forums as one way to improve one's speaking skills; then on p. 41 watching movies with subtitles is mentioned. Methodological terminology can be notoriously confusing when different authors use the same word to mean different things; intuitively, however, one senses the first afore-mentioned activity has more in common with writing, while the latter involves primarily listening.
3. The underlying message of the work, mentioned both in the Abstract ("The research proved that learners are more or less autonomous and might be considered good language learners") and Conclusion ("It is a good result supporting the expectation learners try to be autonomous in language learning and they meet the characteristics of good language learners"), appears to be that sufficiently motivated learners will acquire a foreign language more or less independently of their lessons at school. At the same time, however, we are told that "only one of the teachers [in the author's survey] believes that learners look for their own ways to improve their speaking skills; the rest of them do not do so" (p. 43). Is this not a further instance of the author confusing the overall picture of language learning as a whole with the sub-category of speaking skills in particular?

Recommended grade: **Very good**

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 18th May 2015

Signature:

