

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

Thesis Author: **Klára Frolíková**
 Title: *Scaffolding Strategies in Teaching Speaking Skills*
 Length: 59 pages
 Text Length: 45 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 and 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	See comments overleaf.
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	

Final Comments & Questions

Comments

The work is well researched and neatly presented; unfortunately, the extremely low number of participants in the survey means the results carry little validity.

Questions

There seems to be a typical element of methodologists' wishful thinking on p. 14. Smaller groups in language classes may indeed increase individual talking time but where is the guarantee that the talk will always take place in the target language and even be relevant to the topic in hand? Moreover, it is also perfectly possible to remain silent within a group whenever the teacher's attention is focused elsewhere.

There are certain issues arising on p. 23 where the author writes: *Alber (2014) reminds that it remains to be seen what the opposite of scaffolding a lesson is. It would be saying to students "Read this nine-page article, write a detailed essay on the topic it explores, and turn it in by Wednesday" (para. 1). Students are provided with no safety net, no parachute, no scaffolding.* Here the opening sentence suggests that nobody knows what the opposite of scaffolding a lesson is, yet the next sentence provides an example. But is the imaginary essay assignment a paraphrase of Alber or Ms Frolíková's own suggestion? Either way, there is nothing ambiguous about the task itself and one imagines it would be given only to students who have long since grown out of any scaffolding phase. Further, there appears to be a certain metaphorical confusion here inasmuch as both safety nets and parachutes are life-saving devices, whereas that is not the primary purpose of scaffolding: indeed, many building workers have, alas, suffered serious injury or worse after falling from such constructions.

Recommended grade: 2 – **Very good**

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 16th May 2016

Signature:

