



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:** PhDr. Tomáš Gráf, Ph.D.

**Reviewed as:**  a supervisor  an opponent

**Author of the thesis:** Bc. Kateřina Hasalová

**Title of the thesis:** Nonword repetition in bilinguals. Does performance differ from  
Developmental Language Disorder?

**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



**Brief description of the thesis** (by the supervisor, ca. 100-200 words):

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

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

The study aims to explore an intriguing question connected to the use of nonword repetition tests with bilingual children. Nonword repetition tests are typically used to assess the development of phonological skills of children in their developing L1 and the results may indicate problems in this area. The thesis aims to analyse how these tests are performed by bilingual children and children with developmental language disorders in order to see the potential of these tests to uncover developmental language disorders in bilingual children. This is a very good topic which was worthy of exploring in depth.

The theoretical part contains some very good passages and a very good section on literature review, which covers a large range of what appear to be recent and relevant sources. The text is easy to read, mostly very logically structured and carefully planned. The stimuli are adequately described and so are the four models chosen for analysis. I appreciate the use of the statistical analysis (a linear mixed effects regression model). Errors and typos are only very occasional, and the thesis makes a very good overall impression. The data set (obtained within the limitations of the covid restrictions) is suitable for the chosen task, and the tests are well carried out and interpreted. I consider the abstract really well written (I might suggest making the hypothesis somewhat more explicit and mention how large the samples were).

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

While the theoretical part is very competently written within each of the sections, occasionally the logical sequence is somewhat disrupted. For example, section 2.2 does not logically connect to the previous section. Until that point the author dealt with the L1A processes and section 2.2 very abruptly introduces the topic of non-word repetition tests. This could easily have been solved by one introductory sentence at the beginning of 2.2 to explain the connection explicitly. Similarly, I would like to see a more explicit explanation of the transition from Section 2 into Section 3 (Bilingualism). This would improve the flow of the text.

Research questions and the hypothesis are not sufficiently explicitly stated at the end of the theoretical section. The author mentions what is going to be explored and why but not which concrete aspects and what the underlying hypothesis might be. It is therefore not easy to evaluate the adequacy of the selected research approach.

The data could have been described in somewhat more detail with more metadata provided, but given the circumstance they may actually not have been fully available.

In the Analysis section, I find it difficult to understand the two tables provided on p. 40. The caption does not sufficiently explain what the table represents. Neither is it explained in the text. Consequently, I could not understand what this means, especially as regards the column labelled "Age" which actually displays negative values. If the heading is "Age" and the caption (nor the text) does not explain what the numbers represent, then interpreting negative values for age is very difficult to perform.

Similarly hard to interpret is Table 3. Again, neither the caption nor the accompanying text make it possible for me to understand what the values represent (or what the units of measure are). On the contrary, there are also very good examples of captions, e.g. for Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5. However, while these are good and explain what is going on in the tests, there is very little other accompanying text which



would interpret the charts. Captions should be sufficiently descriptive to understand the basic meaning of a table or chart but their interpretation should be mentioned in the body text.

In Table 8, for reasons hard to ascertain, the figures in the Estimate, SE and dF given are printed in the exponential notation (scientific format). This makes comparison with the previous tables a bit more tricky for some readers. But mainly it is inconsistent and for these number it does not make much practical sense. I know there is a note below attempting to explain this but in real terms, why should you print  $dF=36$  as  $dF=3.600e+01$ ? But this is a detail.

In Figure 9, the Czech word „lineární“ was left.

In Table 10 I cannot understand why the degrees of freedom are decimal numbers.

The results are, however, well discussed in the discussion in the last chapter of the thesis.

In the whole thesis, compound adjectives with numbers are not hyphenated (e.g. “4-syllable word” is written as “4 syllable word”), which is nonstandard.

For the interpretation of the results it is a shame we do not have more metadata about the linguistic background of the bilingual participants (how much English are they actually exposed to? Is it comparable? etc.)

The title of the thesis is somewhat illogical as two incomparables are being compared in it, both in the English and in the Czech titles. More care could have been taken here. The Czech title contains the word “děti”, the English title does not imply this. Could the title not have been something like: Comparing performance in nonword repetition tests by bilingual children and children with DLD? Because essentially it is the performance of these two different groups that is being compared, and not performance with developmental language disorder as is suggested by the English title.

Lastly, the use of a discontinuous decimal numbering system in this thesis is somewhat confusing and highly unusual. Some chapters are not numbered. The Introduction should have been numbered as 1, Theoretical Framework as 2, and its subsections than 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1 etc. Thus, in Methods there is a section 3 (dtto for sections 3.1 and 3.2) which appears in the thesis twice.

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

Besides some questions mentioned above, which need answering, I would like to know the potential of these tests to uncover Developmental Language Disorders in bilingual children.

**Proposed grade:**

excellent  very good  good  fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Prague, 15 January 2021