



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: Mgr. Ondřej Fúsik

Reviewed as: a supervisor an opponent

Author of the thesis: Bc. Daniela Marková

Title of the thesis: *Language learning through adaptive graded readers*

Year of submission: 2023

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 diploma thesis on adaptive graded readers and L2 acquisition offers a well-organized and insightful exploration into modern language learning tools. Given the backdrop of the pandemic and the rise of AI in education, the study's relevance is undeniable.

Chapter 2.4 stood out for its balanced view on traditional strategies, suggesting an evolution rather than a replacement. The incorporation of gamebooks, meticulous vocabulary selection, and ethical considerations adds depth to the discourse on graded readers.

Though the study found no significant differences between the experimental and control groups, feedback indicates that adaptive graded readers may enhance motivation and satisfaction. This finding invites further comparisons with traditional digital mediums.

In summary, the thesis combines rigorous research with practical insights, highlighting the evolving landscape of digital language acquisition.

Weak points of the thesis:

One potential area for refinement in the thesis is section 2.1 on Language Acquisition. Compared to the depth in sections 2.3 to 2.5, this section felt brief. While constraints like the diploma's scope and the vast nature of the topic likely influenced this choice, a more expanded discussion could have added value.

Additionally, the study's main objective, creating a digital reading material with an adaptive feature, was not fully realised as described on page 55. Although the majority of subjects completed the reader at the highest difficulty, future research might benefit from a redesigned experiment, perhaps with a larger sample size or extended material. This suggestion, however, recognizes the limitations of a diploma thesis.

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

Here are some suggestions for the discussion; however, not all of them necessarily need to be addressed during the discussion:

1. On page 11, the author mentions, "Researchers disagree on the cut-off age for early bilingualism with another language." Could the author provide her perspective on this cut-off age, and could she elucidate why some researchers suggest the age of four, specifically referencing Hummel 2014?
2. On pages 13 and 14, the author posits that the Czech spelling convention "is transparent in its reliance on grapheme-phoneme conversion." Is this assertion universally accepted, and might there be a more illustrative example of such transparency?
3. On page 13, the author discusses sight words in the context of alphabetic orthography. Do, for instance, readers of Chinese use a similar approach with high-frequency characters? Does the work of Grabe and Yamashita (2022) shed light on this matter?



4. L2 acquisition and L2 reading acquisition indeed present a lifetime's worth of exploration. Is the author inclined to pursue further education and research in this specific area?
5. Does the author intend to further develop the graded reader, especially given that it was initially conceptualised as a means of the survey? Given the plethora of similar applications available, does her application offer a unique proposition?
6. Beyond reading, is the author intrigued by other facets of language acquisition?
7. Sathya (2021, p. 32) highlights certain disadvantages of MALL and CALL. Could the author elaborate on potential strategies to mitigate these shortcomings? Additionally, in the author's view, do the disadvantages outweigh the advantages?
8. Implementing such technologies in the classroom could potentially increase the screen time for children, which is already a growing concern. What is the author's stance on this issue?
9. On page 34, the author cites Pope (2010) suggesting that interactive fiction stories can often seem "disjointed and perplexing to readers." Could the author elaborate on the basis of Pope's assertion and the evidence he presents? Furthermore, what is the author's perspective on this matter?
10. How did the author delineate the boundary between gamification and traditional gaming, ensuring that the reader did not inadvertently transform into an RPG game?
11. Given that all students tested on page 55 were proficient enough to bypass the adaptive feature, would it have been beneficial to select a more diverse sample to fully evaluate this feature?
12. In reference to page 50, how did the author determine the optimal number of subjects to ensure sufficient data for the study?
13. On page 58, it is noted that the experimental group expressed greater satisfaction. Does the author speculate that disguising the educational component as a full RPG game might alter the satisfaction levels, potentially leading to values even lower than 1.429 and 1.380?

Other comments:

Proposed grade:

excellent very good good fail

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

Prague, 28th August 2023