

Statement prepared by the supervisor of *Mgr. Veronika Volná* relating to their studies and dissertation entitled “*Lexical Obsolescence and Loss: The Case of Early Modern English (1500–1700)*”

submitted in 2023 at *Department of English Language and ELT Methodology*

I. Overall evaluation of PhD studies

Veronika Volná has started her PhD studies in 2016 (switching to a newer version of the programme in 2017). Over those 7 years, she has been consistently a hard-working student as well as a trusted and reliable colleague. She has proven a versatile scholar tackling a number of research topics including forensic linguistics, collocability, verbal reflexivity, legal doublets, postnominal modification, diachronic as well as parallel corpus linguistics and finally lexical obsolescence (her dissertation topic). On most of these topics, she has presented at international conferences:

- *Forensic Analysis of Anonymization Strategies in English*. Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics, Aberdeen, 2016 and 13th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Forensic Linguists, Porto, 2017.
- *Collocations of kingly, royal and regal from a diachronic perspective*. History of English Language in Poznań biannual conference HEL-P, Poznań, 2017.
- “I feare me that...’: Reflexive Verbs in Early Modern English.” ICEHL XX (20th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, Edinburgh, 2018.
- *Legal Doublets in the Old Bailey Corpus*. ESSE 14, Brno, 2018.
- *The Dynamics of Postnominal Adjectives in Middle English*. SELIM 31, Valladolid, 2019.
- *Creating a Latin-OE parallel corpus for contrastive analysis*. Old English Syntax and Semantics 2019 Symposium. Logroño, 2019.
- *Towards a Classification of Lexical Obsolescence and Loss in Early Modern English*. ICHLL 11 International Society for Historical Lexicography and Lexicology. Logroño, 2021.

Some of these activities resulted in papers published with international journals:

- Červa, P., Volná, V., & Weingartová, L. (2020). Dealing with Newly Emerging OOVs in Broadcast Programs by Daily Updates of the Lexicon and Language Model. In *Speech and Computer. SPECOM 2020. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*. (pp. 97–107). Cham: Springer.
- Volná, V., & Šaldová, P. (2022). The Dynamics of Postnominal Adjectives in Middle English. *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies*, 31(2), 31–47.

The latter article being a product of the second of the following projects she has been a collaborator on:

- Online tutorial for work with the EEBO corpus. Internal Grants at CU FA, 2016.
- Adjective Postposition in English. Grant Agency of the Czech Republic 19-05631S, project lead: PhDr. Pavlína Šaldová, Ph.D., 2019–2022.

Mgr. Volná has also co-organised a couple of international conferences, namely:

- ICAME 38, Prague 2017
- “Author as Editor, Editor as Author”: Fifteenth annual conference of the European Society for Textual Scholarship. Prague, 2018.

She has taught an MA level course *Chapters in the History of the English Language* at the Metropolitan University Prague and participated in an Erasmus+ study abroad stay at the University of Malaga in 2019-2020.

Among her other notable roles was the co-editing, proofreading and translating for two linguistic journals published by the Faculty of Arts:

- Studies in Applied Linguistics, 2014-2018.
- Linguistica Pragensia, 2018-19.

It is clear from all her activities noted above that as a student Mgr. Volná has not only diligently carried out all her duties (gaining A on all her annual assessments) but has gone well above and beyond those duties – consistently furthering the research in the topics she has taken interest in and promoting the faculty's & department's (international) cooperation.

II. Overall evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation covers a relatively under-researched topic of lexical obsolescence focusing on the Early Modern period of English, which is usually understood as a period of large scale lexical innovation. In this, the dissertation follows an important topic in word-formation studies – innovation as a possible major cause of obsolescence.

The dissertation updates an existing quantitative methodology to identify candidates for obsolescence innovatively applying it on the EEBO corpus; and then qualitatively analyses the candidates in order to construct a categorization of obsolescence that could be useful e.g. in lexicographical projects. The categorization and the analysis leading up to it could be seen as the author's major contributions to the field – especially because of the detailed reasoning about the causes, progress and effects of obsolescence on the vocabulary not only of the period and not only in English.

While the topic of the dissertation may seem relatively narrow and the methodology not profoundly innovative, the combination of the quantitative approach and the technical expertise on the one hand as well as the qualitative approach and the philological expertise on the other make it a demanding project which the author handled very adequately. Her overall dedication and continuous work on the dissertation including regular consultation but also a lot of her own initiative is highly commendable. Overall, the dissertation is an important contribution to the field.

III. Comments relating to the dissertation [if any]

In the hindsight, the dissertation could have been slightly more ambitious in comparing the data across more datasets – either in the same period and language/variety or over different ones. Showing that the same results of the qualitative analysis obtain over a more diverse set of varieties would certainly strengthen the case of the proposed categorisation. However, that has become evident only in hindsight and is not in any way a major drawback.

IV. Any questions for the defence

Interestingly, in the couple of months between the submission and the defence, the OED has attempted to implement a more systematic approach to obsolescence in tagging all supposedly obsolete entries so that these are now easily searchable through the interface. Could the author discuss how this relates to her results (e.g. the candidates she has analysed)?

What other datasets (in the same or different period/language) could be leveraged to support her new categorization and would she expect any major differences in the results based on different datasets/varieties?

V. Conclusion

I provisionally classify the submitted dissertation as *passed*.

11.8.2023

Mgr. Ondřej Tichý, Ph.D.