



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:** Eva Maria Luef, Dr. doc.

**Reviewed as:**  a supervisor  an opponent

**Author of the thesis:** Dorota Waczlavová

**Title of the thesis:** Linking in British and American political debates

**Year of submission:** 2024

**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)

The thesis evaluates types of linking in spontaneous speech of British and American English speakers. The topic is quite relevant and the study can contribute interesting insights into linking preferences. The introduction is good but should be more focused. The results are good and intuitive, and Ms Waczlavova is cautious in promoting her findings. The language of the thesis is exceptionally good.

**Strong points of the thesis:**

- Interesting topic
- Well written
- Good descriptive analyses
- Informative visualizations
- Awareness of limitations of one's own research

**Weak points of the thesis:**

- The introductions meanders through too many unrelated topics
- No statistical support for findings

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

1. As you hint at a few times in the thesis, speech rate has an effect on the presence of linking. Please explain the details of this connection. What was the impact on your results?
2. What aspects of your findings did you find most interesting and would like to follow up on in the future?

**Other comments:**

Quite a few phenomena described in the introductory part of the thesis are not directly related to the actual study. On page 23, readers are introduced to "linking" for the first time. This is followed by further discussions of phonological phenomena, where Ms Waczlavova explicitly states that the topics are not relevant for the context of the study.

p. 26: I am not so sure that intrusive r's are acceptable nowadays (as implied at the beginning of p. 26). There is still a considerable degree of stigma associated with them, at least in Great Britain.

The book by Tucker and Mukai 2023 seems to provide the main input for large parts of the introduction.

I liked the methods description of how the annotations were done and the challenges that were encountered during annotating. The example of "wanna implement" and the presence or absence of glottalization exemplifies the problems that one can have with acoustic annotations. The awareness of



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Ms Waczlavova regarding a certain degree of inaccuracy in the acoustic work is valuable for a researcher.

The results presented in Figures 4 and 5 are interesting – I am surprised that glottalization is less prevalent in British speakers than other types of linking. Overall, the results are intuitive: British English shows more linking. Figures 6 and 7 are also quite informative. The grammatical-lexical divide is an interesting fact in itself.

I like the idea of looking at extreme cases in more detail. Explaining outliers is a novel and clever way to explain variation.

The future outlook mentions L2 and I think this would be a great idea to study linking in L2 speakers.

**Minor comments:**

- The “we” phrasing at the beginning is a bit unusual; later it is switched to “I”. And also the “you” address to the reader is odd (e.g., on page 8).
- Some of the figures are blurred, with barely readable captions (at least in my PDF version).

**Proposed grade:**

excellent  very good  good  fail

(grade 1-2)

Place, date and signature of the reviewer:

*Prague,*  
*August 26, 2024*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Lena", written in a cursive style.