



REVIEW of BA diploma thesis

Author of the work: Ema Straňavová

Title of the work: Apology strategies: The contrastive study of apologies in Slovak and English

Supervisor: Mgr. Markéta Janebová, PhD.

Opponent: Mgr. Markéta Dančová

Author of this review: Mgr. Markéta Dančová

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Points /results (for each section & proposed classification)

<i>excellent</i>	5	A
<i>very good</i>	4	B
<i>good</i>	3	C

<i>acceptable</i>	2	D
<i>weak/sufficient</i>	1	E
<i>insufficient</i>	0	F

	Points
<p>1. <i>Originality and new contribution to the field, up-to-date presentation of the problem.</i></p> <p>An interesting topic with a present-day relevance. The author analyzes apology strategies in English and Slovak, and brings a cross-cultural comparison based on her own collected data.</p>	5
<p>2. <i>Awareness of treatments in the field (literature).</i></p> <p>The author uses a wide range of sources to understand the core phenomena. Additional comments of the author regarding the theories themselves (or developing the thoughts) would be beneficial, as some parts seem to be only compilations of citations, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapter 1.1: could have been developed a little bit more. I would appreciate a deeper explanation of the key terms, possibly some example situations.• Chapter 2.5.1: again, even though the author works with the concept of <i>face</i> and explains <i>negative</i> and <i>positive politeness</i> from this perspective, she could have used some examples. <p>Some of the linguistic terms from pragmatics are neither further developed nor explained to the reader (e.g. p. 12, <i>felicity conditions</i>).</p> <p>Throughout the theoretical part, the literature review seems to be repetitive in some chapters, so the reader has the feeling that s/he is reading the same part s/he has already read before.</p>	3
<p>3. <i>Clarity of the topic, research question(s), hypotheses</i></p> <p>The research questions are stated clearly in Chapter 4.</p>	5
<p>4. <i>Methodology.</i></p> <p>The author uses well-prepared questionnaires in English and in Slovak. The questionnaires are a suitable tool for measuring the author's research questions; several situations are described in the questionnaires, and the participants of the study are supposed to come up with an apology in the I-perspective which would fit the given situation. What is highly appreciated is the use of various situations which differ in the social status between the participants (of the imaginary situation), which enables to answer the research question 3. An</p>	3

<p>extra part of the questionnaire also consists of several questions focusing on the socio-demographic data of the participants.</p> <p>The author collected data from 47 participants. What I lack is the explanation of the process of recruitment of the participants – where did the author recruit the participants?</p> <p>The author mentions that some of the participants misunderstood the instructions: “few respondents ignored the condition of writing in the I-perspective, and they decided to describe what they would do if such situations happened” – do I understand correctly that the author did not clean the data? (ex. (53)): <i>Pani by som sa ospravedlnila a pomohla nákup pozbierať. (I would apologize to the lady and help her pick up her groceries)</i> + appendix</p>	
<p>5. <i>Argumentation, discussion, interpretation of the results, summary.</i></p> <p>The author divides the analysis into two main parts: 6.1-6.6 English responses and 6.7-6.12 Slovak responses. The subchapters analyze responses in each of the situations. Every subchapter follows the same structure, starting with the description of the situation (and the relation between the participants) followed by the analysis of the strategies used. The subchapters also contain tables with the distribution of the strategies. This structure makes it easy for the reader to follow.</p> <p>In every subchapter, the author uses specific examples from the collected data. At the end of every subchapter, she formulates the “generic structure of the apology”.</p> <p>The analysis is followed by <i>Results</i> (Chapter 7), which should provide a detailed comparison of ENG/SK and answers to the research questions. The author presents the reader with a summary of the preceding subchapters and points to the differences between apology strategies in the languages. The results are linked to the theoretical background. In the results for the research questions 2 and 3, the author admits not collecting enough data to draw some generally applicable conclusions, however, she is still able to comment on the intensification methods and the impact of the relationship between the participants.</p> <p>The author has a small numeric mistake in the first interpretation: “... English is <u>275</u> and by Slovak respondents <u>294</u>. ... Slovak strategies outnumbered the English by <u>18</u> strategies.“, which is rather unfortunate given that this is the crucial part of the thesis.</p> <p>Even though the author mentions (p. 19): “Even though many researchers consider gender as an important variable influencing the apology ... for my research, the more important factors are the age and nationality.” is she planning to make a more detailed analysis of gender/education/sociodemographic data? If not, why did you include them in the questionnaires?</p>	4
<p>6. <i>Formal aspects of the work: format, graphics, bibliography formatting.</i></p> <p>The thesis is sometimes hard to read due to the formatting. I would appreciate the standard style for academic papers (12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, etc.).</p> <p>Some chapters should also be divided into more paragraphs, e.g. the crucial part of the thesis - <i>Results</i>. This part was especially difficult to read, as the reader is presented with a stream of information (p. 41): “The biggest contrast between the English and Slovak strategy distribution can be spotted in the number of IFID strategies. The English respondents applied more Offers of repair than Slovaks, which shows the higher interest in so called paying for the offense caused. In both versions, no Promise of forbearance strategy was applied. No taking of responsibility super-strategy was chosen only once, and it was in the Slovak version. When it comes to positive politeness strategies, there were also differences spotted in its usage. “ – here, for example, the author could have divided the results into smaller paragraphs, commenting on IFID, positive/negative politeness, etc. Also, this chapter lacks an introductory sentence and transitions: “The first research question:”.</p>	1

<p>More careful formatting would also be appreciated in case of examples, as they get lost in the flow of the text – ex. (3) is clearly visible and distinguishable from the rest of the text, but (4) and the following ones should be separated from the text itself more visibly.</p> <p>Tables should not be broken across two pages (e.g. p. 21).</p> <p>More attention should be paid also to citations and the work with the citation style manual - to exemplify (p. 13): (Austin 1962; Searle 1969); (Austin, 93, 107, 1962); (Olhstain and Cohen, 1981, 34) – every citation on this page is written in a different style.</p>	
<p>7. <i>English (language correctness, style)</i></p> <p>Generally, the thesis contains several language mistakes. The author is also inconsistent when it comes to BrE/AmE (e.g. apologize/apologise/realise,...) or to pronoun usage (p. 24 + appendix) “...<i>you spilled coffee over their shirt 5 minutes before his leaving..</i>”.</p>	3-4
<p>8. <i>For the supervisor (if not applicable, write " Not applicable ")</i></p>	NA

Topics / Questions for the defense:

1. How did you recruit the participants? Could you describe the whole process?
2. Do I understand correctly that you have included the data from the questionnaires in which the participants did not follow the instructions? (responding in the I-perspective) If so, could you explain why?
3. The questionnaires included socio-demographic data. Given the small number of respondents, it is not possible to generalize on the statistical level. Why did you collect the socio-demographic data if you do not work with them – were you originally planning to make a statistical analysis?

I recommend the work for the defence: YES

Proposed classification:¹ C

Date: 01.06.2022

Name (and signature): Mgr. Markéta Dančová

¹ The itemized number evaluations above do **NOT** provide automatically the final evaluation - some weaknesses are more crucial than others and some cannot be compensated at all. The proposed classification is therefore independent on these statistics. It is the comprehensive evaluation of the presented written work and it can be still modified during the defence to become the result of the defence.