

POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **Radio Phone-ins: Comparison of Questioning Techniques across Two BBC Current Affairs Programmes**

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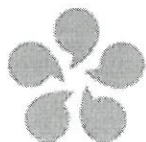
Oponentka bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Jana Kozubíková Šandová, Ph.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis

This thesis focuses on a comparison of questioning techniques used by broadcasters in two current affairs phone-in debates, one dealing with a social issue, the other discussing a political topic. Both were broadcast on BBC Radio 4. The author analysed the use of questioning techniques and their impact and influence on further development of the debate. In her research, the author employed the method of Conversation Analysis (CA) to examine the data, therefore, Chapter 2 discusses the discipline of CA shortly. In Chapter 3, the author describes methodology used in the thesis and data collection. One of the debates was transcribed by the author herself, the transcript of the other discussion was found on the BBC website, however, she had to modify it to an extent. Chapter 4 describes types of radio phone-in programmes and the genre of current affairs. Chapter 5 focuses on institutional talk and distinguishes between formal and non-formal institutional talk. Chapter 6 deals with questions in media talk generally, Chapter 7 provides a more detailed analysis and comparison of question preface in both types of debates, and finally, Chapter 8 is devoted to the use and possible effects of tag questions. All findings of this study are summarised in the Conclusion section.

Overall assessment

The thesis is a valuable contribution to the pragmatic analysis of spoken discourse, namely, single phone-ins. The author's aim to analyse and compare questioning techniques used by broadcasters in phone-in debates was fulfilled quite successfully. Conversation analysis (CA), a methodological framework chosen for this analysis, is a very useful approach since its main focus is the study of talk in interaction. Basic data of CA are recordings of natural speech that are then transcribed according to special transcription conventions. The author of this thesis also transcribed the debates, or at least their parts. This must be appreciated as it is usually a long, quite difficult and time-consuming process. However, the reward for this hard work is rich and useful material for analysis.



The study demonstrates that questioning techniques differ in both types of phone-in programmes. The broadcaster in social current affairs posed more specific questions, which results in greater effectiveness in terms of controlling the debate and changing its direction if necessary. On the contrary, the host in political current affairs asked rather general and more open questions so the debate was less controlled and developed more freely. This may be connected with the function of the questions in both programmes. The political current affair phone-in focuses rather on information gain in order to explain the topics discussed, the social current affair phone-in should result in a lively but also controversial debate.

The analysis also shows that the use of question preface may shape the debate. In the discussion on a political topic, there are only general prefaces consisting in a short introduction of the caller. The host in social current affairs gave also background information on the caller, which restricted the caller's answer and, at the same time, influenced further development of the debate. From this it follows that the question preface should be somehow controversial so that the callers feel the need to participate.

Another focus of the thesis was the use and functions of tag questions. According to the author, the functions of tag questions in both debates differ. However, the conclusions drawn only on the basis of altogether three occurrences of tag questions (two occurrences in the social current affair debate, one incidence in the political one) are somewhat shaky, even if they rely on relevant theoretical sources.

In general, the analysis of radio phone-ins presented in this thesis is sensitive and systematic, however, it is rather shallow at some places, without explaining the facts more thoroughly. The result is that some sections or paragraphs look rather repetitive. Also, some assertions are too firm and categorical but it is necessary to take into account that the material analysed is not so extensive and the findings of the research are somewhat limited.

The language of the thesis is rather average. There occur some problems with the use of articles and wrong punctuation.

In spite of the above-mentioned problems, I would like to appreciate the original and quite difficult topic of this thesis and the way the author coped with it. The thesis meets the general requirements posed on BA theses.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**

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Datum

Podpis