



POSUDEK VEDOUCÍHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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

Název práce: **Questioning Techniques in Spoken Media Discourse: Analysis of Authentic Data in Two Television Genres**

Autor/-ka práce: **Soňa Hluší**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Helena Lohrová, Ph.D.**

1. Brief characteristics of the undergraduate dissertation

Soňa Hluší's dissertation undertakes a comparative analysis of questioning techniques in two different television genres: the political interview and the talk show interview. To this effect, the candidate has selected two authentic interviews, a representative of each. These she transcribed and subjected to an analysis. The common denominator of the two data extracts is a British celebrity and comedian, Russell Brand. The methodology of Conversation Analysis has been employed in order to provide an insight into the interactional aspects of questioning in the two genres.

2. Overall assessment

Soňa's work addresses the research question posed and approaches the analysis in a heuristic manner characteristic of the field of Conversation Analysis (CA). The presentation of authentic data – identified and transcribed by the author herself – makes the dissertation interesting, original, and worthy of discussion.

It is satisfying that the dissertation represents the candidate's own work. Although the analytical insights are, in most cases, not original, and the methodology of CA is not always applied correctly, the candidate clearly demonstrates her familiarity with an area that was new to her, one she ventured to explore on her own initiative. The selection of the key themes used by the author to frame her analysis is relevant, as are the sources she employs to construct her argument.

The analysis is wrongly founded in places; it would deserve either re-structuring or further elaboration in order to enable the candidate to reach conclusions grounded in the data. For example, on pages 20-22, 'interactional asymmetry' occurs as a result of the power status attributed to the role of the interviewer. While it partially applies to and is reflective of the respective genres, the dominance of the individual speakers and the contributions they perform in the interview are often achieved interactionally on a turn-by-turn basis. The ultimate design of turns and their impact on the overall outcome of the interview is, in the case of the two genres examined, thus achieved through both the employment of specific questioning techniques and how the speakers orient their responses. A further example (page 24) illustrates one of the places in the dissertation where the candidate draws a conclusion that is clearly at odds with the principles of CA methodology. In her analysis, the candidate falls into the trap of assigning intentions to what has been said: this is impossible to claim retrospectively. Fundamentally, transcripts of spoken interaction enable the



interpretation of the unfolding of talk and the consideration of the impact of the individual contributions.

Throughout the body of the analysis the candidate repeats the aims of the work, as on page 25: “The subject of the analysis is the political interview with journalist Jeremy Paxman who questions public figure Russel Brand on his political opinions”. While such positioning of the matter of the dissertation is most probably for the reason of signposting, at this juncture it seems misplaced as it fails to add to the analysis and merely disrupts the rational flow.

The transcripts underpinning the entire analysis form a valuable part of the undergraduate dissertation. It is obvious that they have been worked on with diligence, although occasional inconsistencies occur. For example, in Appendix 2 the onset and finish of the overlapping that carries over lines 31-33 is unclear and appears to be marked wrongly. On the other hand, the marking of the time flow of the interactants’ speech and of the prosodic features of their talk certainly do embrace some of the conversational dynamics in the two interviews.

Referencing follows the protocol, in the main. However, the references listed in the Section of Works Cited do not always appear in the body of the material. While it may be assumed that these sources contributed to the actual shape and direction of the candidate’s work, failing to acknowledge their specific contribution in the actual text is a shortcoming of a grave degree. These include, for example, the publications of Edwards, J.A. and M.D. Lampert (1993) and Hepburn, A. and Bolden, G. B. (2013).

It is a shame that the text has not been proofread more carefully. Numerous errors including ill-formed clauses, gender bias, use of determiners, and punctuation undermine the ultimate effect of this heuristic study which otherwise, in terms of its focus, is highly relevant, topical, and interesting. Such infelicities include for example: p. 23 “that they provides”; p. 26 “the political interview data is not as organised as it seems”; and on the same page also “The talk show interview, ..., is not so easily identified”; p. 34 “that particants in data extracts produces”; p. 39 “indicates false start-sound abruptly cut off”, and further “when the speaker changes his intonation”.

Finally, the Conclusion is a fair attempt to synthesise the observed conversational behaviour and the findings reached.

Despite these reservations the work meets the requirements of a BA dissertation and I do **recommend it for defence**. I propose the evaluation **very good** (velmi dobře).