

**Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric**  
**Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia**

Thesis Author: Jan Vála

Title: The competition of individual means of expressing generic reference with English nouns

Length: 34 pages

Text Length: 32 pages

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	The introduction provides a foretaste of the confusion to come. Even in the very first sentence, it is unclear which "specific phenomenon" is being referred to.
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient <b>Very deficient</b>	For this and subsequent sections, see overleaf for detailed comments.
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient <b>Very deficient</b>	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient <b>Very deficient</b>	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient <b>Very deficient</b>	

**Recommended grade: 4**

The work requires substantial re-writing before it may be considered suitable for an oral defence.

**Main shortcomings**

- 18 out of 32 pages of so-called main text consists of a list of items taken from one novel so the author's own words do not really amount to very much.
- On a theoretical level, it is difficult to agree with Mr Vála's assertion that the English language has four articles – and still less with the notion that *a* and *an* should be viewed as two separate items in this system. Given that Chesterman is referred to on p. 11, it is somewhat surprising there is no mention of this scholar's representation of the English article system containing five items: zero – a[n] – unstressed some – the – null.
- The concept of genericness is not as straightforward as it seems and Mr Vála's cavalier approach to the topic does little to clarify matters: some of his examples do not fit the generic category at all; several others are at best borderline with much depending on the surrounding context.
- Hlavsá (1975), cited on p. 2, then Hawkins (1978) and Lyons (1999), cited on p. 3, are all absent from the list of references.
- The list of references itself is incorrectly formatted.

**Some other problems**

- p. 4 The general statement is made that "It is sometimes very hard to distinguish if the noun is countable or not" but here (as elsewhere in the work) no examples are given to illustrate the point.
- p. 7 Careless referencing: a parenthesised DUŠKOVA is given in capitals but without any year of publication.
- p. 7 Following on from a mention of 'Man' in the sense of 'a person/people', Mr Vála states: "The noun woman can be used" – but the accompanying example actually uses the plural form 'women'. We are then told that "in most cases, the noun *women* usually act [sic] as a singular noun woman." (Whatever that is supposed to mean).
- p. 9 *A German is a good musician* is given as an example of *definite* [my emphasis] article generic usage.

There are also various minor problems with language use *passim*: these include inappropriate use of second personal plural pronouns, contracted forms (in particular *it's*) and insertion of a comma before a subordinate clause introduced by *that*.

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 20th May 2012

Signature:

