MUNI ARTS

Faculty of Arts, Master's Thesis

Thesis Supervisor's report

Thesis Title:	Analyzing Face-Threatening Humor in Ryanair's Customer Interactions on Twitter
Field of Study:	FF N-AJ_ FNAJpJ [sem 4, cyk 2]
Department:	Department of English and American Studies
Author:	Bc. Lucie Kadlecová
Supervisor:	prof. Mgr. Jan Chovanec, Ph.D.
Reviewer:	Mgr. Jana Pelclová, Ph.D.

Supervisor's recommendation for overall mark: A

1. Evaluation of central idea, thesis, focus and purpose: A

2. Evaluation of organization, logic and arrangement: A

3. Evaluation of topic development, support and evidence: A

4. Evaluation of language, style, standard usage, citation and bibliographic standards: A

Comments and/or topics and questions for the thesis defence:
The thesis provides an analysis of a set of humorous messages produced by Ryanair on Twitter in response to customer comments on their service, using the conceptual framework of thee General Theory of Verbal Humor. The thesis sets several research questions that seek to identify how Ryanair signals the non-humorous framing of its (humorous) replies, the logical mechanisms used in such data, and the ways such humour relates to the pragmatic conception of face threat.

The thesis shows a very good understanding of literature on humour studies, including some of the most recent publications. It is original in its approach and brings new findings, contributing to the research on humorous practices in digital/social media. The thesis has a logical structure, providing an in-depth overview of approaches to the study of humour, GTVH, as well as the characteristics and technical affordances of the social media in question. The most original idea in the thesis is probably to be found in Section 6.3.1 (Characteristics Influencing Evaluations of Humor), where several characteristics are identified and their mutual combinations in Ryanair's tweets are explored. In this connection, my question is about the relationship between characteristics 1/a (Customer is directly addressed) and 5/e (Customer addressed by a vocative) - what motivates the separate treatment of these two categories, rather than, e.g. combining them into a single one? (Table 8 indicates that the two characteristics are used differently, so I would like to hear more about this interesting phenomenon.). In reference to the progress of the work, the author had more findings than could fit into the thesis, as illustrated by the sentiment analysis provided in the Appendix. Although it was eventually decided, for the sake of methodological consistence and overall coherence decided not to elaborate on the sentiment analysis, I would like the author to comment during the defence on this aspect of the analysis and outline some tentative conclusions in this area, as well as perhaps the applicability of this method for linguistic analysis, where it is increasingly being used.
I found the thesis to be very meticulous and consistent in terms of language, style, citations and bibliographic standards. The author shows a high level of academic sophistication and demonstrates her ability to carry out linguistic research, to work creatively with the existing literature and to incorporate new ways of processing the data (e.g. the employment of sentiment analysis).

Brno 12th June 2024

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prof. Mgr. Jan Chovanec, Ph.D.