

Treårsevaluering

ENG345 Selected topic in English linguistics IV

Sociolinguistics in Britain and Ireland

Kevin McCafferty

Introduction

This course is not suitable for a three-year evaluation given that (a) this topic and syllabus were being taught for the first time, and (b) the content of ENG345 changes every time it's taught, depending on who the instructor is.

The following description was made available at the end of the autumn semester 2020:

This is an advanced introduction to the sociolinguistics of Great Britain and Ireland, based on a textbook by one of the foremost practitioners of variationist sociolinguistics (Tagliamonte), combined with critical reading of recent studies from either side of the Irish Sea. We will look at the expansion of the variationist sociolinguistic approach from its initial application to phonological variation and change into other levels of linguistic variation, examining the pros and cons of doing so.

Course reading

The main textbook used was:

Tagliamonte, Sali A. 2011. *Variationist sociolinguistics. Change, observation, interpretation*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

This textbook provides a thorough account of variationist sociolinguistic methods and selected major findings. In addition to this book, selected chapters from the following recent collections were read:

Braber, Natalie & Sandra Jansen (eds.) 2018. *Sociolinguistics in England*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Durham, Mercedes & Jonathan Morris (eds.) 2017. *Sociolinguistics in Wales*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hickey, Raymond (ed.) 2016. *Sociolinguistics in Ireland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lawson, Robert (ed.) 2014. *Sociolinguistics in Scotland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chapters from these volumes were read critically in conjunction with the relevant chapter of the main textbook. So for example, we read Tagliamonte's chapter on variationist study of discourse phenomena alongside a couple of recent empirical studies of discourse markers in Britain and Ireland, paying careful attention to how researchers tackled the issues highlighted by Tagliamonte as problematical in relation to expanding variationist methodology to the study of discourse features.

The format worked reasonably well. With the usual kinds of variation in terms of presentation skills and attention to detail, the students tackled the task of evaluating the empirical studies quite well in general, and some of the presentations were excellent.

Examination and evaluation

Teaching: 8 x 2-hr seminars; a total of 16 hours teaching. Each student took responsibility for presenting and leading discussion of one of the empirical studies in the second half of the semester.

Exam: One-week home exam.

Student statistics (cf. attachment)

Six students completed the exam; all passed. The grade distribution was: 1 A, 3 Bs, 1 C, 1D.

Rammevilkår

The course was run as an online seminar due to pandemic restrictions. No serious problems were experienced with the online format.

Studentevalueringer

Due to oversight on the part of the course instructor, no student evaluation was carried out for this course.

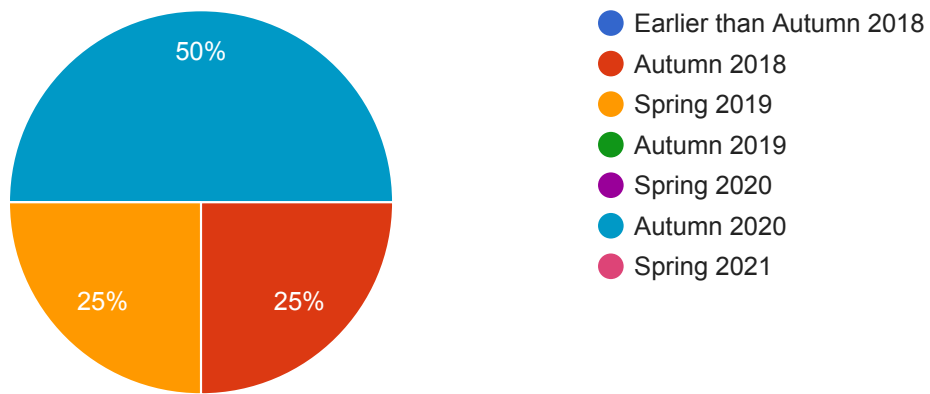
ENG350 Linguistics Spring 2021 feedback

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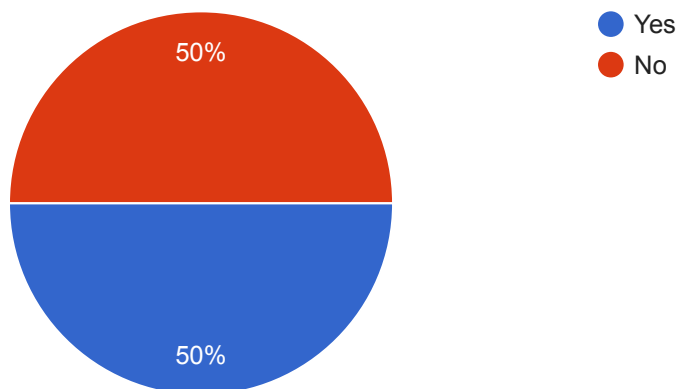
When did you start ENG350?

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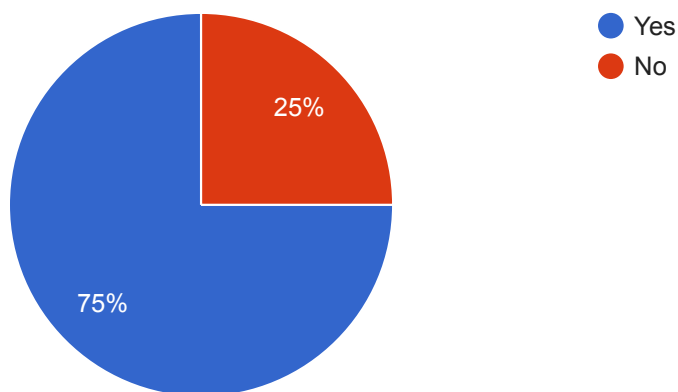
Are you in the Lektor programme?

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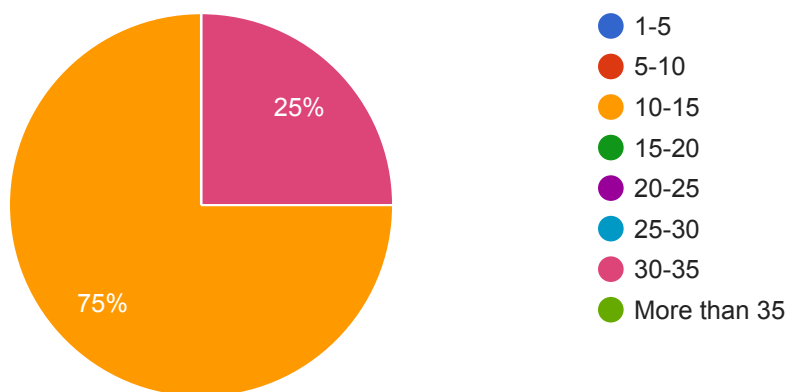
Have you completed your course work up to this point?

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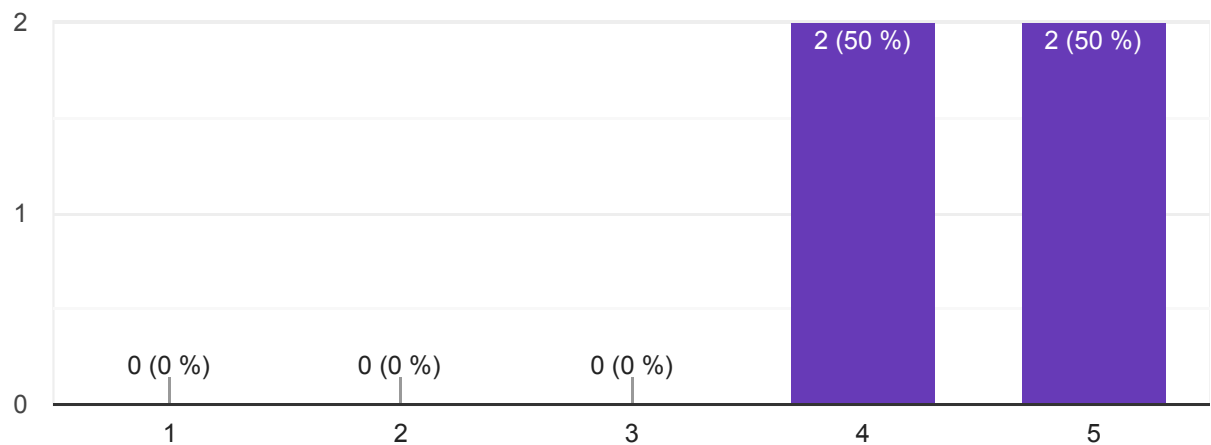
How many hours per week on average did you spend on independent study (including thesis research & writing)?

4 svar



Were you given adequate information about your ENG350 course programme?

4 svar



Do you have any suggestions for improvement on course information flow?

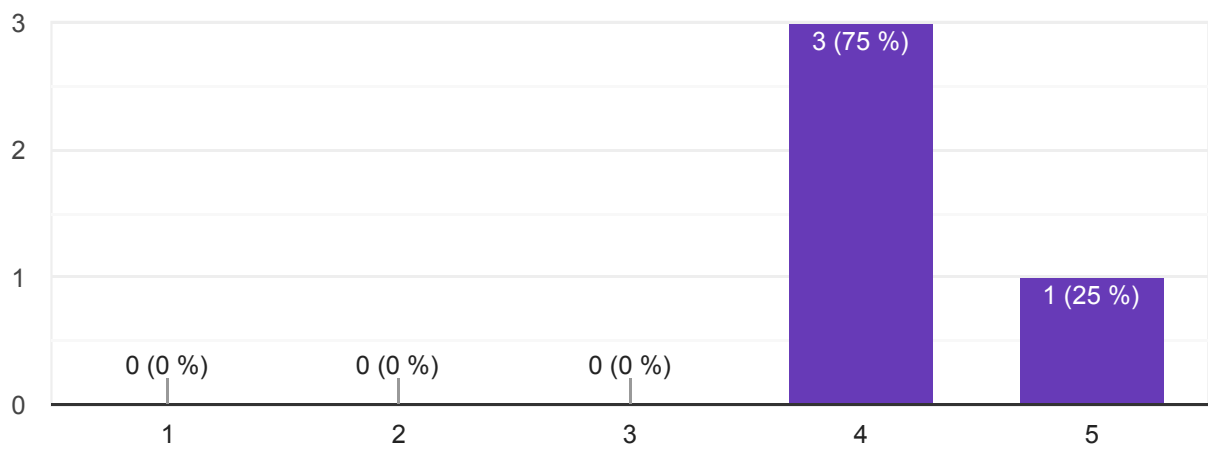
2 svar

No

Personally, I need clear, multiple reminders of various deadlines, especially what should be done on Studentweb. I've made a couple of unnecessary mistakes that have caused me a lot of stress.

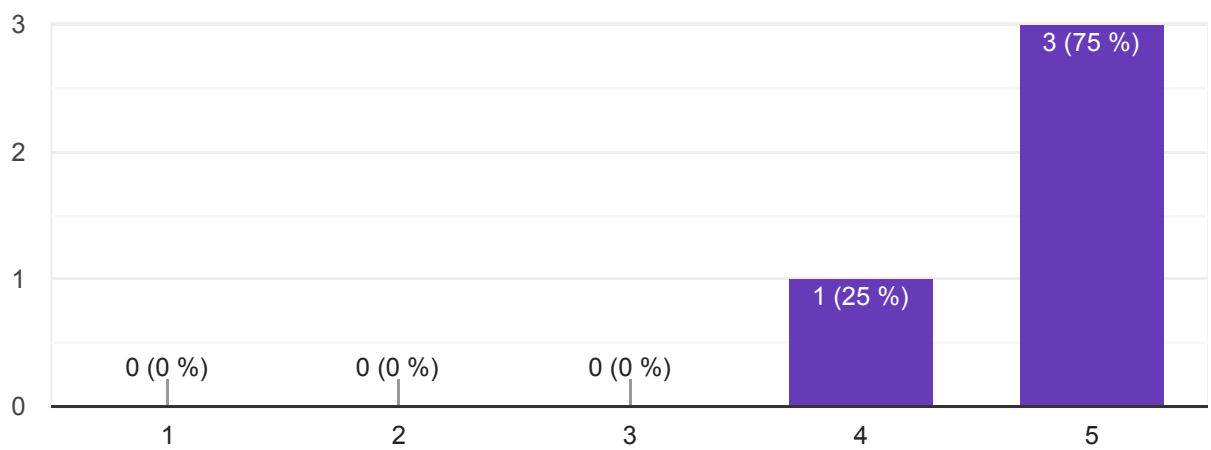
Did the WiP seminars help you to learn?

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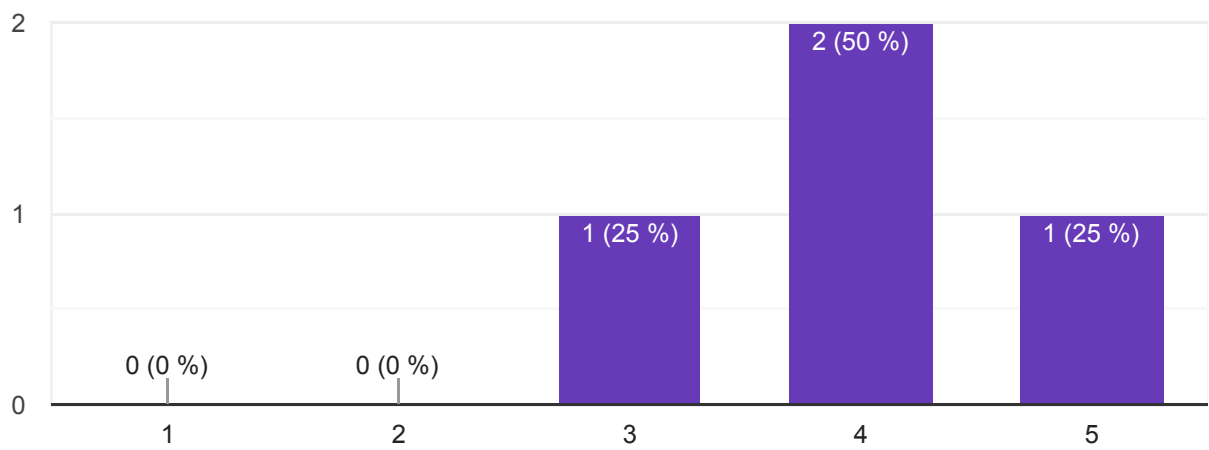
Were the WiP seminars well organised and conducted?

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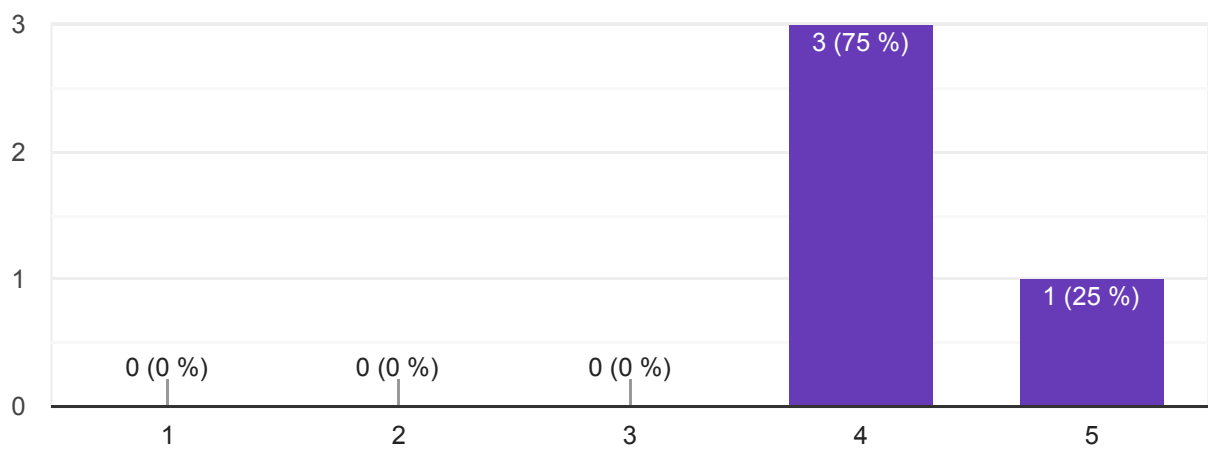
Did the digital format of the WiP course on Zoom work well?

4 svar



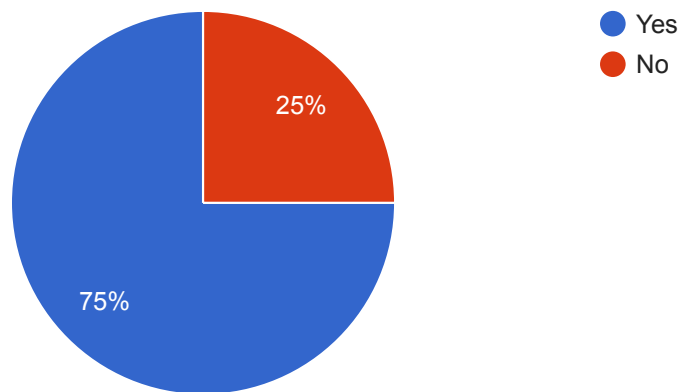
Did student presentations and comments work well?

4 svar



Have you attended the WiP beyond the obligatory presentations?

4 svar



What aspect(s) of the WiP did you find most helpful?

4 svar

Meeting and talking to other students and staff about aspects of writing. Getting tips and learning what others are doing. Also presenting my chapter resulted in getting help with a problem.

The input from observing others go through their presentations

Insights, comments, and questions from teachers. Answering questions - gets you thinking about what kind of questions you might get to defend your thesis. Practicing presenting research findings. Strict deadlines - gets you writing. All in all, the seminars are really useful.

The comments from other supervisors and students.

Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the WiP?

3 svar

No

Nope

A downloadable MA thesis template in addition to the style sheet, like some other universities provide. I would rather spend time researching than checking paragraph and table formatting against the sheet requirements.

Who was your thesis supervisor? (Non-obligatory question.)

4 svar

Dagmar Haumann

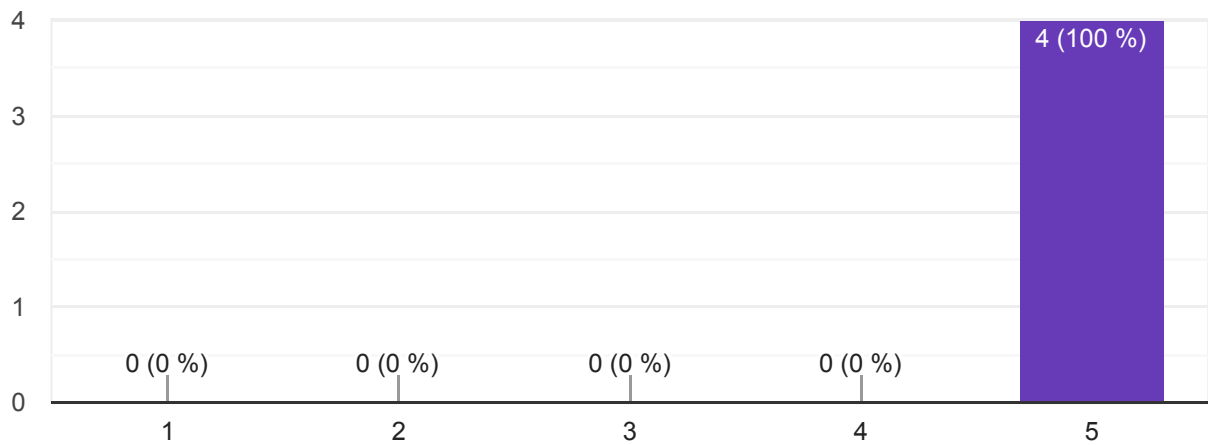
Kevin McCafferty

Jerzy Nykiel and prof. Christer Johansson

Dagmar Haumann

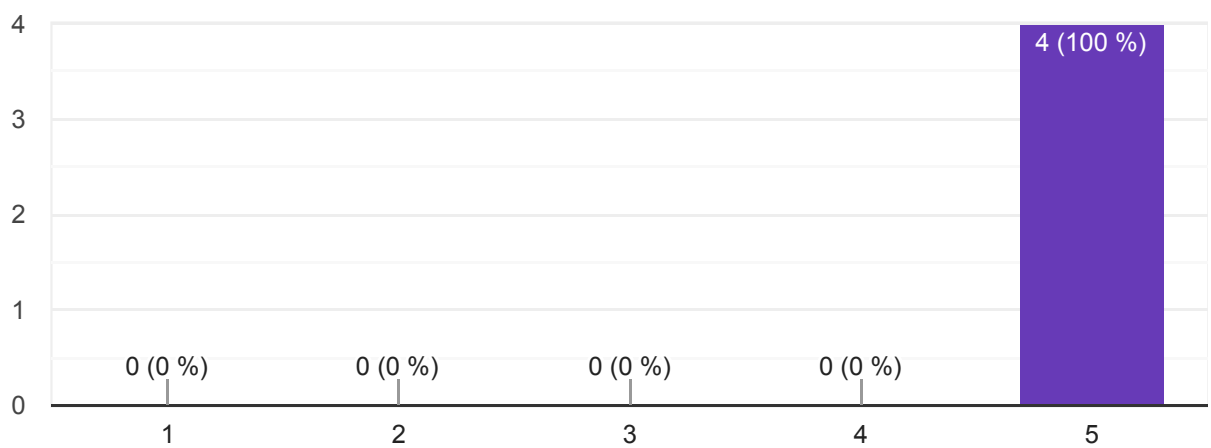
How happy were you with the information flow and practical aspects surrounding the supervision relationship?

4 svar



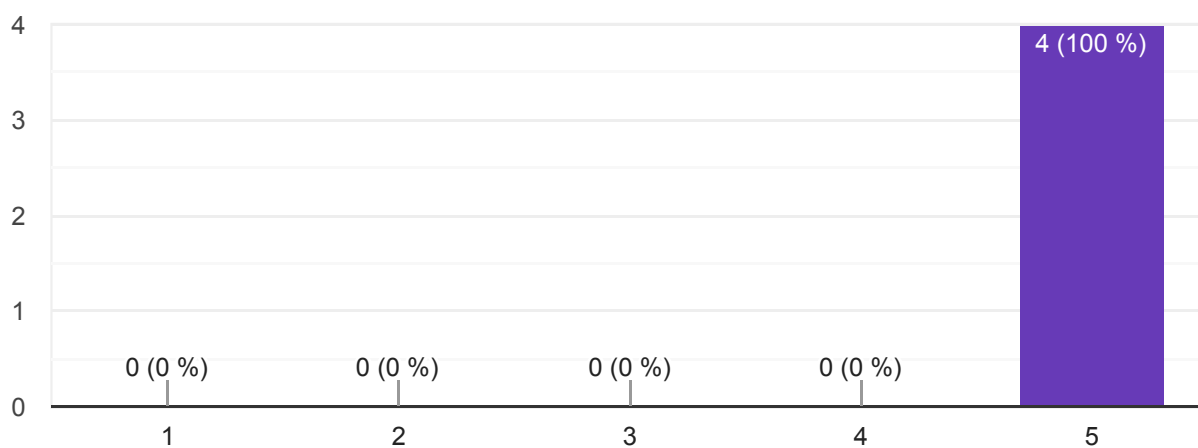
What was the overall quality of your thesis supervision like?

4 svar



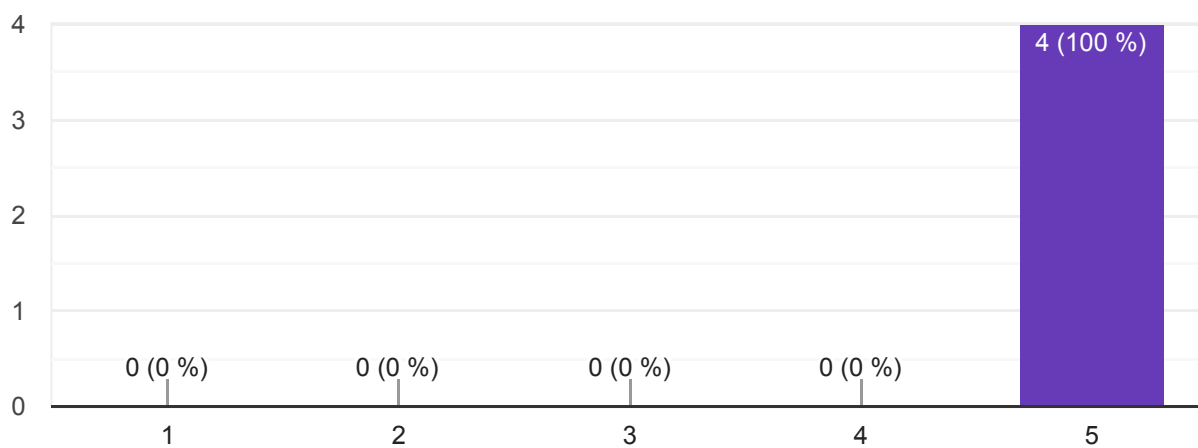
How happy were you with the frequency of supervisions?

4 svar



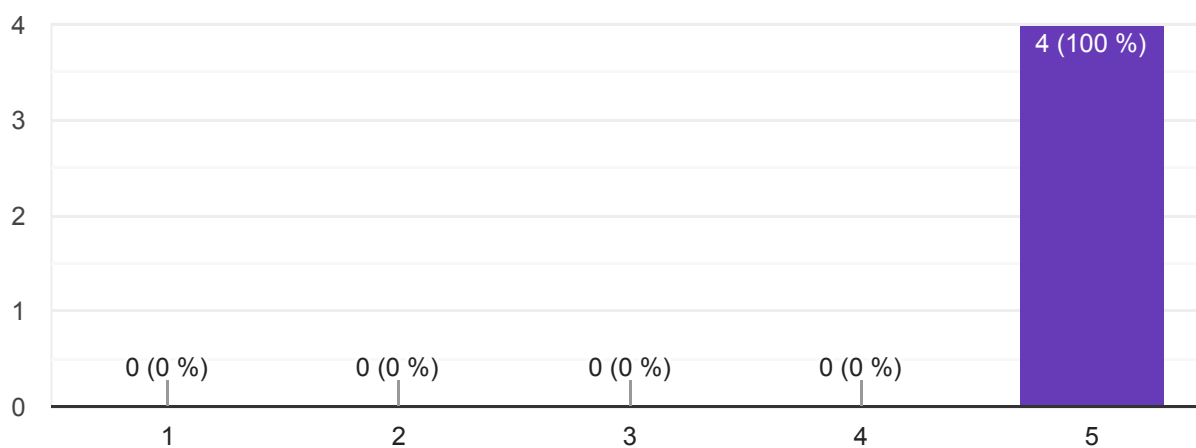
How happy were you with your supervisor's speed of response?

4 svar



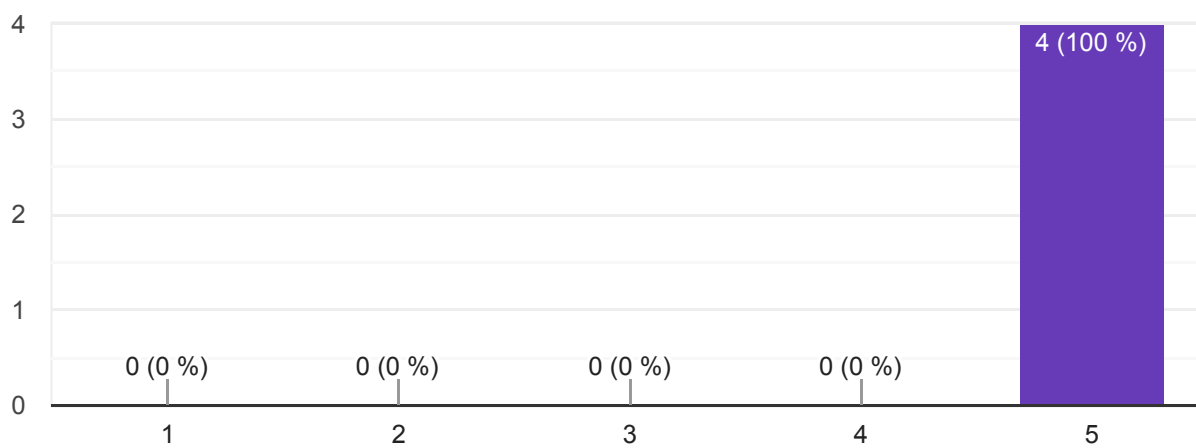
My supervisor guided me towards useful materials for my research.

4 svar



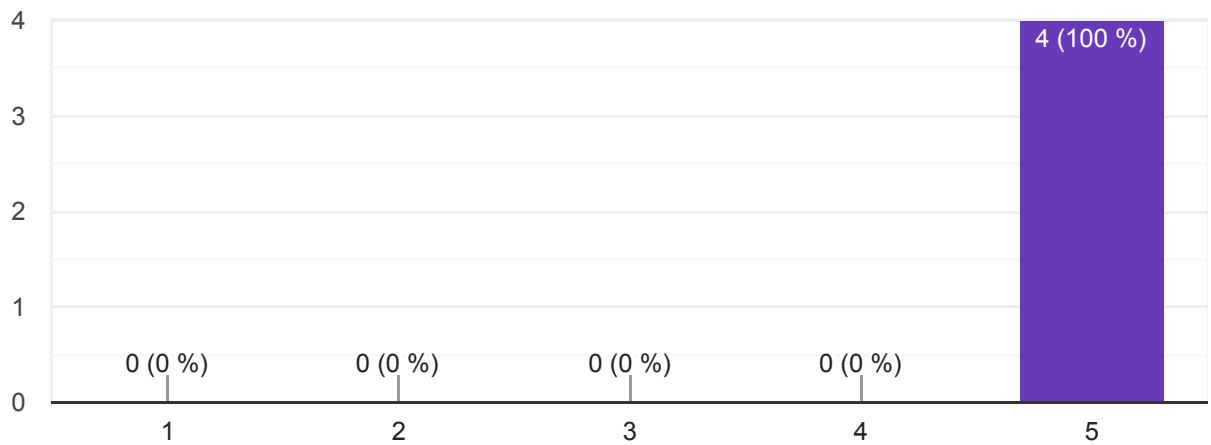
My supervisor provided useful guidance on the methodological and/or theoretical aspects of my research.

4 svar



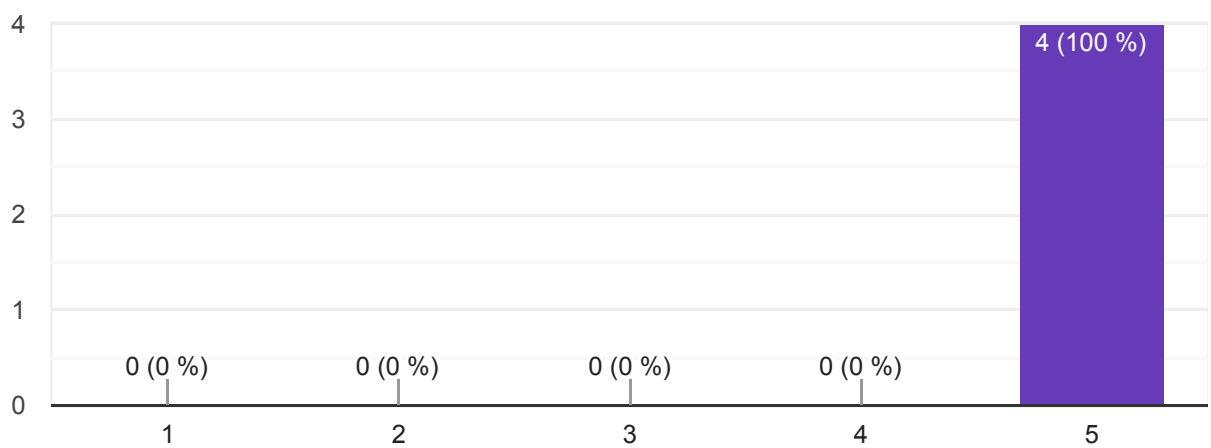
My supervisor helped to improve my conceptual thinking in a way that was useful to the progress of my thesis.

4 svar



My supervisor helped me to improve my text.

4 svar



What aspect(s) of the supervision relationship did you find most helpful?

4 svar

Dagmar has been very supportive and has always answered any questions I have had very quickly by email. Our meetings have also been very good. She has given me lots of time, and we have covered every topic that was needed and more. She is also very knowledgeable and has a great sense of humour:)

Everything! Personally, I really needed someone to ground me during stressful times and my supervisor helped by giving me thorough feedback and calming me down m

Regular meetings, frequency of meetings, accessibility. Thorough, timely and constructive feedback on written submissions. Supervisor involvement and commitment. Advice on availability of conferences and opportunities to publish research. Guidance and encouragement. Sufficient freedom to conduct independent research.

Everything! The comments were straight to the point and very helpful. Easy to get in touch with. Very understanding and encouraging.

Do you have any suggestions for improvement on the supervision relationship?

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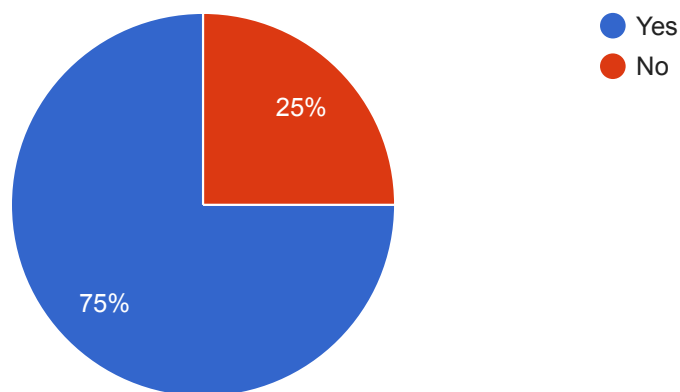
No

The relationship is great. I would like to have information from the beginning about how the paper will be graded and what it will take to get a good grade. But that is just a question I have not asked yet.

No :)

Is your thesis proceeding according to plan?

4 svar



If you are delayed or expect to be delayed with your thesis, what do you think is the main cause?

1 svar

Recruitment of participants was impossible and the laboratory was unavailable because of the pandemic.

If you are/will be delayed, what would help you complete?

1 svar

Instruction on how to research more efficiently, not go into too much detail, and make the writing shorter.

Do you have any other comments regarding ENG350?

3 svar

I think it's important making sure everyone gets the same information!

Thank you for the course. It was another good experience at the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

I really enjoyed the course. The feedback in WiP was very helpful.

I do know, however, that a few of my fellow students who had other supervisors didn't enjoy this process as much and often felt that their supervisor weren't helping them. This goes not only for linguistics, but literature as well. I know they got it all sorted out in the end, but I really hope this gets followed up because having a supervisor like, for example, Dagmar has been key to me looking back positively on this process.

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