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## **Report on** **Molnar Claudia's PhD thesis**

### **How effective are teacher education courses in developing confident, communicative language teachers?**

This dissertation sets out to investigate an important and current issue in applied linguistics/language pedagogy, namely, teacher education and its effectiveness in the Hungarian context. I was very happy to see the topic, as it has been long overdue for professionals to study teacher education and related issues in a Hungarian context. It is praiseworthy that such a relevant topic was selected, I hope that the candidate will continue her research in the future.

The introduction sets the scene for the dissertation. It contains information on the structure of the work as well, which orients the reader. The rationale presented here is based on a personal account and it is not really situated in the relevant academic field. The gap is only presented in an implicit way and the importance of this gap is not argued for. In addition, although the title of the dissertation is really informative, I am not sure what the explicit aim of the study was.

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical background to the studies. The chapter describes the research context, two individual difference variables and CLT. The structure of this chapter is clear and logical, but I would have loved to see some justifications for the selected topics here. Why is it important to situate the present study in the field of individual difference research? Why autonomy and WTC were selected as important variables? How CLT is linked

to these variables? Finally, it needs to be pointed out that the chapter is mainly descriptive and there is a lack of critical synthesis that might help to establish the research gap and see the ways the present dissertation advances our field. I think this study clearly contributes to the research field in a meaningful and creative way, but it should have been explained in a convincing manner.

Chapter 2 summarizes information pertaining to research methods. Four research questions are employed to guide the study, which are linked to the literature review and the perceived aim of the study. Still, some concepts came as surprises, for example, peer feedback as it was not covered in the reviewed literature. In order to answer the research questions, four independent studies were carried out and the methods were described in some details. What I miss from this section is the justification of the selected methods and the steps that were taken to complete the studies. In addition, issues pertaining to validity and reliability of the study could have been addressed explicitly.

Chapter 4 details the results of the study. It is still a bit difficult to follow the results as there were no direct links established between the four studies presented in the methods section and the various subchapters of the results chapter, although the headings are certainly helpful. Results are described in an adequate way, but the quantitative data is far from convincing given the limited sample sizes.

Chapter 5 contains the discussion of the results. Some attempts were made to discuss the results as they are linked to some earlier studies, but this could have been done in a more detailed way by referring back to the reviewed literature. I am not sure how the studies reviewed for the concept of willingness to communicate can inform the results of the present study.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation and discusses the relevance of the results to teacher education and curriculum planning. The author raises some very important and timely issues here, which proves that she is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the current program contents. Further research directions are also set out to aid the further current practices, which is praiseworthy. What I miss is a self-reflective summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the present research study.

Formal consideration: The dissertation could have been completed in a more careful way and I was somewhat disappointed to see that some of my remarks given in the in-house round were not addressed in the final draft. Paragraph structures often seem to be arbitrary and academic writing conventions are not followed carefully. In addition, direct quotes sometimes appear without page numbers (p. 2, p. 27, p. 29, p. 30) and there are occasional inconsistencies in the use of single and double quotation marks. Finally, the References section contains a high number of inconsistencies.

On the basis of the above considerations, I can conclude that this thesis presents an original research on a timely and important topic, and, therefore, I think that it meets the requirements of a PhD degree. I am looking forward to discussion the dissertation with the author at the public defence.

Questions for the defence: 1. What are the main quality control issues pertaining to the four research studies? 2. How do you see the role of willingness to communicate in autonomous learning? 3. What do you think teacher training programs in Hungary lack most?



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