

Answers to Dr Katalin Doró's questions and comments in her review of the dissertation titled

### **Bilingual written word recognition of learners of English in a vocational secondary school**

I would like to thank you for reviewing my thesis. I really appreciate your detailed analysis and suggestions. I understand that I seem to have been lost in the number of tests and the size of my data, and I was not very successful to make the whole research coherent enough, to create a reader-friendly version of the dissertation. I am a teacher of English, who was curious to see how creative students can be. While reading the literature, different ideas came to my mind hoping that with these playful activities I can gain valuable knowledge about my students, their motivation, creativity, aptitude, etc. I thought it was worth investigating a group of students, who come from a non-elite secondary school, from disadvantaged circumstances, to see whether the success in language learning is in line with the level of creativity in L2. Recognizing words as a task seemed to be a good research topic, so I started to design new, or adapt already available tests. Both me and the students were enthusiastic in this project, and I was grateful to my students for their activity. Finally, it was too hard for me to make a synthesis of my findings, so I understand you find it difficult to see the focus and coherence. Once I get to the publication of the dissertation, I will definitely accept all your valuable recommendations, think over all the critical remarks, and hope to be able to „sell my product” in a digestable way.

As for the structure of the dissertation, I followed the sample at our doctoral school and included the literature review in Chapter 1. Introduction. As I was blown away by the number of tests designed for my study, I enumerated among my research aims some beyond written word recognition, as well, which broadened the scope of my dissertation, and made my life more difficult in terms of focusing on the original idea of checking bilingual visual word recognition. My research questions suffer from the same problem. I added questions that do not mirror the central topic named in the title.

You are missing the role of the researcher in planning and conducting the study and her assumptions, beliefs. As I am a teacher in the school I organized the experiment, I made the schedule and I coordinated the testing. I had no specific previous assumptions, my aim was to find the possible correlations between the influencing factors of word recognition.

Your comment on my statement on page 9, I can say that it was based on foreign language teaching and the OECD PISA result is related to Hungary.

In Chapter 2, I wrote about diglossia and undermotivation of students as the test series included one test on the bidialectism of the participants, and an AMTB test on their motivation.

Regarding participants, the selection of them was based on student availability. It seemed to be a good idea to test students who are at hand, and whose school achievement is known to me. Besides, there was no previous research in this school type, my aim was to investigate a different kind of population.

As far as your remarks on the students' financial background is concerned, I am afraid I need to defend my standpoint. Unfortunately, for these families/children having an own TV set, a mobile phone, or affording private classes is not a parental choice. They cannot afford to go to the cinema or theatre.

The testing period took place in the academic year of 2017/18, so talking about the forced turn to distance education would not have been relevant in the dissertation.

You raised some questions to which I can answer the following:

- For the examination of parental attitude and support, I would collect data from the parents themselves.

- In my interpretation, communicative situations are the ones in which students have to speak with the teacher and with each other in the English lessons. Furthermore, classroom observations and monitoring would be useful to check whether students are inhibited to speak in either language.

- L1 dominance does not equal with preference towards mother tongue in some cases. To my surprise as well, there are students who like to use English better and they use it as often or more often than Hungarian. This, obviously, needs more clarification. I would carry out semi-structured interviews, in which students would be asked about their everyday language use, about the functional distribution of their languages.

- Scientific conclusion referred to Decanou's findings, according to which ICT use improves students' school achievement.

On page 119. I wrote: teachers "are advised to apply various and playful language teaching methods supplemented with many forms of ICT, especially in the era of digital teaching in order to provide their students with every necessary component to successful foreign language learning." By every necessary component I meant those factors, which can be supported by a

language teacher in order to help a language learner to become successful in learning a foreign language and promote better L2 school achievement. Other factors, listed by me in this thesis depend mainly on the student, on the language learner's skills and attributes.

You had some thought-provoking questions in connection with the following statement: "The age of appearance of ICT devices and language attitude negatively correlate with L2 school achievement. The earlier ICT devices appear in students' life, the worse L2 school achievement they have." How do you explain this? Can it be the case that there are a number of interrelated factors that are hidden behind ICT appearance and L2 grades? What can these be?

At the age of three (which was the earliest time of onset of ICT use) children play with mobile phones. It is just a tool for having fun, they watch tales on it or play on it. These activities are not meaningful, as for these no complex thinking is essential, they do not really actively take part in the process. Moreover if children start using a mobile phone at the age of 3, they presumably got less attention from their parents.

Later, when they are older, they start consciously using ICT as a tool for a purpose, which can be entertainment (social media, youtube etc.) learning (searching for information, use drafts etc.). In this case they play an active role in the process of using ICT and as it is based / it happens in practice not in theory it is a kind of knowledge construction. The venue of ICT usage is also significant. In the school the tasks are not really lifelike. Translations and grammar practice on an ICT device is not as interesting or enjoyable for a teenager as a movie on the Netflix or a game on the internet. Not to mention the used competencies (think in advance, combination etc.) which are vital in these cases. When they can decide on the usage of an ICT device themselves, the motivation is likely bigger in the activity, as they had the chance to choose the way of it.

Once again, thank you very much for acknowledging the merits of my dissertation, for your patience and energy, for your time devoted to giving me advice and raising a critical voice for the improvement.

Siófok, 2021. 05.19.

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