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### **Report on**

**Hazim Taisir Dayij Alkhrisheh's PhD thesis**

**Title: An attempt to conceptualize and operationalize language learning effort in relation to proficiency, motivation, critical thinking, and the multilingual level in an EFL context of Jordan**

This dissertation investigates an important and current issue in education and second language acquisition research, namely, foreign language learning motivation and critical thinking. The innovative aspect of the topic is that it maps effort and critical thinking in a single project. In addition, a particular contextual gap is also filled.

#### ***Form:***

The dissertation uses an acceptable level of academic English with some minor problems such as the outdated use of "we", occasional short paragraphs/odd sentences and overuse of certain linking words. APA rules are applied with only minor mistakes in the text, apart from the Tables not being in APA, but the after-text reference section contains a number of APA mistakes. On a more positive note, on the paragraph-level the dissertation reads well. I think a more careful attention to formal details could have added to the quality of the dissertation.

#### ***Content:***

The **literature review** summarizes the main concepts and empirical studies pertaining to the dissertation. The structure is mostly logical and effort was made to provide a synthesis

beyond summary. I miss the candidate's critical voice, but I understand this is one of the most difficult tasks for a junior researcher.

As for **the context** of the study, it is praiseworthy that the investigation is situated contextually well, which means that the context forms an inherent part of the investigation, and hence the context is not merely a backdrop to the study. As I am not familiar with the education in Jordan, I would have appreciated more detailed background information on the country not just previous empirical studies. Concerning this part of the dissertation, I wonder to what extent the status of English in this country shaped the results of the study.

The **methods** section is difficult to follow because academic conventions are not followed carefully. In addition, I think it is not enough to describe what the candidate did in order to answer the research questions but it is also important to justify the methods-related decisions as well in order for the reviewer to be able to judge the quality of the study. Maybe it is my oversight but I miss the part in which the careful piloting of the instruments in the particular context is described. I think that even established instruments need to be piloted for each research study separately as investigations have their idiosyncratic characteristics.

The **results** chapter is shorter than expected and difficult to follow as academic traditions are not followed in a careful way and the analytical decisions are often not transparent. In addition, given the fact that a single set of data was used for the dissertation, a more thorough analysis would have been welcome. The organization of the subsections is often unclear. The **discussion** of the results should carefully address the issues that emerged in the literature review in light of the results. I appreciate that the discussion is structured by the research questions, and it is really reader-friendly that these questions are repeated but the discussion part is often superficial or closer to reviewing literature than actually discussing the results. The **conclusion** contains all the necessary parts including the limitations of the present research, my criticism here is that the summary of the results fails to contain any concluding remarks that take the research results to a new level.

### ***Questions:***

1. What do you think about the possible usefulness of a follow-up qualitative study?
2. What other contexts do you think your results could be generalized and transferred?
3. On p. 79, you write that "We excluded age as an independent variable from this study because the sampling method caused a violation in the sample distribution". Can you provide a thorough justification for this statement?

***Final comment:***

On the basis of the above considerations, I can conclude that this dissertation presents an original piece of research on a timely and important topic in an under-researched context, therefore, I think that the dissertation meets the requirements of a PhD degree. I am looking forward to discussing the study with the candidate at the public defense.



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