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Report on

Jakub Przybył's PhD thesis

Title: Investigating the relationship between personality factors and the use of language learning strategies by Polish university students

Overall evaluation: I have to admit that this is one of the most carefully written PhD dissertations I have ever read (and the longest, too). Jakub Przybył conducted a thorough investigation on a pedagogically relevant topic in the Polish EFL context. He designed his research to investigate personality factors and the use of language learning strategies and thus provide a detailed analysis of these concepts. The aims and research questions of the dissertation are relevant; each part of the dissertation contributes to fulfil the aims and answer the research questions. The structure and the format of the dissertation follow the appropriate academic conventions, although the proportions are heavily skewed at the expense of the results chapters. In my report I will highlight the most valuable characteristics of the individual parts of the dissertation as well as point out some shortcomings of the research.

Topic / Aim: The topic of the project is highly relevant and the aim is explicitly spelled out in the introduction as well as on p. 120. It would have been more reader-friendly to include the aim(s), gap(s) and rationale of the thesis in the introduction of the dissertation.

Literature Review: This section proves that the author is well versed in the theories related to his area, as in three separate chapters personality, language learning strategies and variables

mediating language learning strategy use are detailed. I appreciate the fact that Jakub provides not only a state-of-the-art summary of the field but also a very detailed historical overview. Another thing that I really like about the literature review that it provides a balanced approach and includes the relevant Polish studies as well in order to contextualize the study and root the present study in the field (p. 11). As far as I can see, the main shortcoming of this review is the lack of critical syntheses, most parts of the review are summaries without acknowledging possible shortcomings of previous research. As a result, the establishing of the research niche and explaining the rationale of the study are somewhat missing. This lack is even more apparent in light of the comment presented by the author on page 98: "It could be concluded that strategy researchers are aware of the lack of consensus regarding not merely the definition of LLS, but also their organization across skills, functions, and other categories." Precisely for this reason, a more critical overview should have been presented and the aim and topic of the research should have been argued for. Finally, I would like to bring up some critical remarks and questions:

1. I am not sure I understand the difference between personality and personality factors. What is the definition of personality factors? Are they really factors in the statistical sense or the word 'factor' is used in its everyday meaning?
2. On page 98, the notion of self-regulation is introduced and discussed without providing a link between learning strategies and self-regulation. What is the link between self-regulation and autonomy? And autonomy and the use of language learning strategies?
3. Some of the statements and examples on page 130 lack references.
4. I miss the explicit links between the literature review and the study.

Research Questions: The research questions are relevant to the purpose of the study and complement one another, but they are not particularly well worded and are not self-contained.

Research methods: Chapter 4 details the technical information pertaining to the studies conducted as part of this dissertation with varying details. Although it is stated the aim of the qualitative study is to triangulate the results of the questionnaire study, very little details are offered in terms of the content and aim of the interview study, the development of the instrument (was it piloted?), and the steps of data analysis. I like the fact the results of the pilot studies are incorporated in the methods section but I miss some correlational data to establish the possible roles of the different scales. In addition, I do not understand why scales with low

reliability were not amended for the subsequent analysis. More importantly, the anonymity of the participants' in each study is threatened by providing the names of the schools that hosted the studies. In sum, I can say that the various steps of the quantitative research are well planned. The description of the methods shows that the most of the details were carefully considered.

Results: The results are presented in a logical order and follow the structure of the research questions. The statistical accuracy is praiseworthy but as hardly any summative and comparative tables are presented with statistical tests it is very difficult to follow the presentation of the results. The unidimensional figures do not help much either. In addition, I do not understand why, after the careful validation process, the author decided to present item-level analysis. As for the qualitative data, they nicely complement the statistical analyses. Finally, I would like to bring up some minor comments/queries:

1. Were there any statistical tests run for data presented in Tables 34 & 35; 36& 37? If yes, what were the results?
2. Page 222: The basis of the interpretation of the scores is unclear. How were the cut-off points established?
3. Table 39: I miss the t-tests and accompanying significance levels.
4. Tables 43: Significance levels are never 0.

I think this is a PhD dissertation with many merits. The careful literature review and the research methods resulted in a highly professional work. On the basis of the above considerations, I can conclude that this thesis presents high quality and original research on a timely and important topic, and therefore I think that it meets the requirements of a PhD degree.



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