



Opponent review of the dissertation

Programme: Education, Faculty of Education, Charles University

Student: Flora Keysan

Name of the dissertation thesis: The Impacts of Keyword Mnemonic and Mapping Techniques on L2 Vocabulary Learning and Retention of 6th Graders within a Group Learning Framework

Opponent: PhDr. Petr Dvořák, Ph.D.

In her dissertation thesis, the author focuses on the impacts of keyword mnemonic and mapping techniques on L2 vocabulary learning and retention of 6th graders within a group learning framework. The thesis is divided into theoretical part and practical part. In the theoretical part, the author deals with vocabulary learning in general and then she describes keyword mnemonic and mapping techniques in details including the recent studies of the techniques.

I have a few critical comments about the theoretical part: the techniques that the author describes should be presented with examples of individual techniques or, for example, pictures and graphs. For a reader who is not completely familiar with these vocabulary acquisition and retention techniques, the differences between these techniques might be somewhat confusing.

My other critical remark is directed towards the inconsistency in the use of terminology – the author repeatedly confuses the terms EFL and L2 throughout the work. The fact whether it is L2 or a foreign language may influence significantly the processes of acquisition and retention of vocabulary.

As the theoretical part is concerned, I consider the absence of pedagogical-psychological background to be the biggest shortcoming of the presented dissertation. The educational and developmental specifics of pupils of the examined age play a key role in the acquisition and retention of vocabulary. The author herself states in the pedagogical implications (page 71) that supportive learning environment and other psychological aspects play a significant role in the acquisition and retention of vocabulary, but she more or less does not mention them in the theoretical part.

The practical part explores the impacts of the keyword technique and mapping strategies on L2 vocabulary learning and retention among 120 female Iranian EFL 6th graders within a group learning framework. The study's participants were assigned to three experimental groups, including keyword method, concept mapping, and mind mapping, and one control group. During 16 instructional sessions, each experimental



group learned target words using instructions of the assigned techniques randomly, while the control group had no special treatment. Upon the instructional sessions, three post-tests evaluated the students' vocabulary comprehension, production, and retention.

I consider the research part of the presented dissertation to be more successful than the theoretical part. The author clearly established research hypotheses, appropriately selected research methods and research design. The author clearly presents the findings from the research and eruditely comments on them.

In conclusion, I would like to evaluate the presented dissertation in the following aspects:

1. The author chose a topic that has been researched for a long time, but is still current.
2. The submitted dissertation met the set goal with certain shortcomings.
3. Appropriately chosen research methods used in the dissertation.
4. The presented dissertation conveys only partially new findings, rather it confirms findings from previous research.
5. The dissertation has its significance for the theory of foreign language teaching and pedagogical practice.

I recommend to discussion submitted dissertation thesis with obvious deficits in the theoretical part and the absence of supplement information on the 16 instructional sessions analysed in the research part of the work.

Questions to dissertation thesis defence:

1. On page 33 the author quotes: "Concept mapping is recognized as one of the foremost teaching – learning devices aimed at improving meaningful learning outcomes" (Aziz et al., 2017). Is it valid for various age categories?
2. On page 63 the author states that the control group exhibited poor performance on the vocabulary retention test. Can the author of the research provide any further explanation?
3. On page 72 the author states that "Furthermore, the effectiveness of the keyword method, concept mapping, and mind mapping may vary based on factors such as learning styles, familiarity with the techniques, motivation, and cognitive abilities among students, which could not be entirely controlled for." It must be said that it depends to a large extent on the teaching style of the teacher as well. How could the author comment on it?



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Conclusion:

In her dissertation work, the author **proved the ability** of independent creative work in the field of Education.

The dissertation thesis **meets** the requirements of the dissertation standard in this field.

26 August 2024

PhDr. Petr Dvořák, Ph.D.