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Opponent's review of the habilitation thesis entitled

Language Learning Strategies in Listening Comprehension

by

Božena Horváthová, PhD (UKF PF KLIŠ)

Dr. Božena Horváthová has submitted a dissertation to the Scientific Committee of the Pedagogical Faculty of UKF Nitra and requested that a habilitation process be carried out on her behalf. As an opponent of her habilitation material, I will - in what follows - review her teaching habitus and evaluate her research achievements with the purpose of expressing officially my claim about her qualities concerning the qualification of a habilitated doctor at UKF.

Dr. Horváthová has been an active teacher in applied linguistics, linguistics and language didactics and methodology at KLIŠ since the acquisition of her PhD degree. She has an impeccable knowledge of English and German, which she makes effective use of both in her teaching and research activities. As a professor for the past six years at KLIŠ, I have happily acknowledged the positive student evaluation of her teaching qualities. Dr. Horváthová is a conscientious, reliable and sociable colleague with whom it is a pleasure to work with.

The habilitation dissertation is based on a published monograph "Language Learning Strategies in Listening Comprehension" (ASPA 2013, ISBN 978-80-89477-13-5) which summarizes her research interest and results of the past several years.

Despite the fact that Dr. Horváthová teaches everyday aspects of applied linguistics practice, her scientific interest leads her to the quest for the meta-levels of scientific inquiry and analysis in the fields of applied linguistics, psychology and language education (pedagogy and methodology). Her research is bold (as it goes against the grain of traditional views on language teaching), creative and innovative (as it proposes a new approach to linguistic cognition by emphasizing the development of active comprehension skills in foreign language learning).

The dissertation has a strict didactic structure: (a) the first part gives a profound and systematic illumination of the terminology from a pedagogical perspective (learning styles versus learning strategies; strategy-tactics-technique; learning-learner-teacher strategies); (b) the second part clarifies the distinction between language learning strategies as opposed to the research methods applied in studying language learning strategies with special focus on research in language learning strategies in the Czech and Slovak Republics; (c) the third part elaborates on a new understanding of and approach to listening comprehension, and (d) the last two chapters describe the nature and realization of the empirical research and the results obtained at great length.

It is the strength of the dissertation that it openly discusses the implications of the research for pedagogical practice and it articulates an overall conclusion to the dissertation. All in all, the dissertation gives a well-chosen selection of current research studies which are sensitive to language learning strategies and discuss critically and reflectively the types of research methods applied to find the most appropriate and most useful language learning strategies for the language learners to accomplish and develop a systematic way to self-studying.

The dissertation surveys a wide range of methods currently employed by educational research only to expand the recommended and applicable research methods in foreign language learning strategies: questionnaires, interviews, diaries, and think-aloud protocols.

Dr. Horváthová calls attention to the usefulness and adoptability of the strategy inventories provided they get combined with other instruments and methods as these inventories are self-report measures. She emphasizes that there is a need for the triangulation of data either with qualitative methodology (e.g. observation, in-depth interviews, video-recording of class sessions) or some other strategy inventory to get reliable results and the validation of various assessment techniques. The most frequent studies in researching learning strategies are studies using different, cross-correlated measurement modes with the same sample of students. The monograph has a useful list of references to strategy inventories and an impressive set of literary sources.

I find the dissertation of great importance to experts who follow the trends in research into language learning strategies. **I recommend the thesis for the defense**, and after the successful defense of the habilitation thesis and the completed habilitation procedure, **I recommend the granting of the title “associate professor” /docent/ in the specialization 1.1.10 Field Didactics to Dr. Božena Horváthová.**

Nitra, 07.02.2014

Prof. Dr. László I. Komlósi, CSc.