

CHALLENGES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HUNGARY: THE RESULTS OF A MIXED-METHODS INVESTIGATION

Kata Csizér, Attila Wind

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem

Keywords: challenged-based language teaching; mixed-methods investigation

Hungarian public education has been criticized by researchers, teachers, and parents alike for often not providing quality education in modern foreign languages (Öveges & Csizér, 2018), which results in Hungarians lagging behind when it comes to foreign language knowledge in the European Union (European Statistics, 2021). The aim of our study is to explore some of the challenges outlined by teachers and some corresponding data from students. In order to achieve this aim, we developed a focus-group interview guide and carried out focus-group interviews with teachers of English and German (N = 12 and N = 10, respectively) and carried out a questionnaire study among students (N = 431). When it came to classifying challenges, four distinct groups emerged in our thematic analysis of the focus group interviews with teachers of English and German: Challenges pertaining to 1) the language; 2) individual differences of students; 3) learning processes within the classroom; and 4) language use outside the classroom. When it comes to language-related challenges, the role of the L1 as well as English (for German teachers) are taken into consideration by our participants. Individual difference variables were mentioned in connection with students' lack of motivation and their time management difficulties and patience. Classroom challenges are related to multilingualism, differentiation, course books, and teaching methods/tasks. Language use outside the classroom poses difficulties due to media use, homework, and the role of teachers. In terms of students' dispositions, we carried out rigorous EFA and CFA analyses, the resulting scale included 20 items covering five dimensions: Teacher, Lexicogrammar, Problem-based learning, Background knowledge, and Contact. Next, structural equation modelling was performed, and the results suggest a complex interrelationship of concepts explaining students' openness to problem-based learning in the classroom. Students' dispositions to challenged-based learning is directly affected by their teachers as well as contact with the English/German language. The former is shaped by their background knowledge about the world and their L1, while the latter is affected by their views of problems pertaining to grammar and vocabulary. Based on our results, we will offer pedagogical both theoretical and practical implications for language teaching in Hungary.

Az előadás elkészítését a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Közoktatás-fejlesztési Kutatási Programja támogatta. Az előadók az MTA-ELTE Idegen Nyelvek Oktatása Kutatócsoport tagjai.