

Best Thesis Award - Yulia Zhuravleva

First of all, on behalf of the Institute of Education I would like to congratulate you for the best thesis award!

What was it like to be notified and to experience the competition and how does it feel to be the winner of the Best Thesis Award?

When I was notified that my thesis was nominated for this award, I was really grateful and felt that all the effort and time I had invested yielded results. I was glad that my research had been noticed and its quality recognized as being that high. It was a culmination of months of hard work, days spent in the library where I felt most productive (changing the environment is my personal recommendation for those who struggle with staying focused while working on the same thing for a long time), and overcoming doubts along the way. Participating in the competition was both challenging and rewarding. One unexpected challenge appeared when the presentation almost overlapped with my job interview. This created a dilemma, but I sought advice from my supervisor, [Krisztina Czető](#), who, as always, supported and reassured me that everything was manageable. That day was particularly eventful for me, and being announced as the winner of the Best Thesis Award was super gratifying. Winning this award not only affirmed the significance of my thesis but also boosted my confidence as a researcher. That was another reminder for me that hard work always pays off.

What was your topic and why did you choose to write and do research on this particular subject?

The topic of my thesis was Virtual Reality and Foreign Language Learning Motivation. As I've been studying in the [EdTech specialization](#), I initially planned to write about emerging technologies and their educational applications. I also have a bachelor's degree in English teaching, so I wanted to combine the two areas I'm passionate about and address current questions in the field. After reading several research studies, I decided to focus on Immersive Virtual Reality technology. Moreover, my choice was inspired by the participation in a study on Creative Thinking and Immersive Virtual Reality conducted by [Enikő Orsolya Bereczki](#) at our faculty. Given the increasing interest in VR's educational potential, I aimed to explore its impact on foreign language learning, emphasizing the crucial role of motivation, psychology, and cognition in integrating VR into language learning practices.

What are your plans for the future? Will you continue studying or will you get a job and starting a career?

While writing my thesis, I realized how much I enjoyed doing research, so I started considering pursuing my studies and doing a PhD in education or a related field. At this point in my life, I'd like to apply recently acquired knowledge and develop my career. I already have experience working as an English and French teacher at school, and I believe it's time for me to use all the skills gained throughout my academic and professional life and take the next step, preferably in higher education. However, I feel like my journey is far from over, there's more for me to learn, and I will definitely return to academia. So, probably you'll see me back at our faculty in 1-2 years!:)

What was the most significant memory(s)/event(s) for you during your years at the Educational Science MA program?

The first semester of the program was the most memorable because being an international student was a completely new experience for me. That time was full of impressions, new acquaintances, and activities. One such activity was the collaborative work we practiced all the time during our classes, whether in groups or pairs, so that every student had an opportunity to get to know the groupmates and their background better. I believe this approach was an incredibly effective way of fostering a learning environment where ideas could be shared openly. I further applied this experience during my internship at Learnitect Design Ltd. when developing a training for ELTE educators on the topic of Educators' Collaboration. This emphasis on collaboration throughout the program has shaped my views on both teaching and professional interactions, showing me that the best solutions often emerge when we work together.

Who would you recommend the ELTE PPK Educational Science MA program to and why?

The Educational Science MA program is for those seeking a fresh perspective on the field. By simultaneously learning foundational and innovative approaches, students in the program get a comprehensive overview of the current state of the educational sphere, including modern trends and practices. I'd definitely recommend the Educational Technology specialization to those interested in digitalization of education, because here you can gain knowledge in transforming education through emerging technologies such as AI, VR, robotics, as well as in instructional design, technology-based assessment and evaluation, game-based learning, and ethical considerations of teaching and learning with technology, among other areas. As for personal experience, the program provided me not only with theoretical understanding but also with real-world applications, which is highly valuable.