

**SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AND ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF LOGOPEDICS**

REVIEW

from **Assoc. Prof. Katerina Shtereva**

about dissertation on topic

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISORDERS  
OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE IN BILINGUAL STUDENTS**

of **Gergana Plamenova Ilieva – Zlatareva**

for the acquisition of Doctoral degree

in a professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program "Logopedics"

Scientific supervisor: **Prof. Tsvetanka Tsenova**

### **1. Compliance of the procedure with the current regulatory framework**

The review was prepared in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva has submitted all the necessary documents for the dissertation defense procedure: curriculum vitae, dissertation and abstract to it, declaration of originality and reliability of the results and a certificate of performance of the scientometric indicators according to the minimum national requirements.

### **2. General biographical presentation of the candidate**

Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva graduated with a bachelor's degree in speech therapy at SU "St. Kl. Ohridski" in 2017, and in 2019 a master's degree in "Developmental Communication

Disorders". During her studies, she showed high motivation and interest in speech therapy and, even as a student, collaborated as a volunteer in a number of institutions and organizations. After graduating with a master's degree, he currently works as a speech therapist at the Center for Public Support for the SOS Children's Villages Program, Private Office "PsihoLogo5" and DG 155 "Veselina". Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva participated in a large number of trainings in the field of speech therapy theory and practice. After successfully passing the competition, in 2020 she was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the doctoral program "Speech Therapy" at the National Institute of Scientific Research, with the supervisor Prof. Tsvetanka Tsenova. During her doctoral studies, she showed a high level of research commitment.

### **3. Data for the dissertation**

The topic of the dissertation work "Interrelationship between oral and written language disorders in bilingual students" is current and significant, as it affects pressing problems in the Bulgarian society and scientific space. On the other hand, it is increasingly relevant on a global scale, due to the growing number of children who speak more than one language and the transition of society to multilingual and multicultural values. In this context, the author focuses on the role of bilingualism in the development of the oral and written forms of speech.

The dissertation has a main content: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, contributions and appendices. The text is 166 pages long and includes 15 tables and 36 diagrams and appendices spread over 9 pages. The cited literature covers 108 titles (67 in Cyrillic, 37 in Latin and 4 from Internet sites).

In the introduction, Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva substantiates the topicality and scientific significance of the topic. The work makes a good impression in that already in the introduction the main questions related to "what difficulties are faced by bilingual children who are required to learn to read and write and in what way can they be helped to overcome so that they can have a better and successful professional realization". The objectives of the research are also well presented in this part, the tasks and hypotheses of the research are described, as well as the results of the obtained research.

The scientific rationale of the dissertation is presented in Chapter One THEORETICAL OVERVIEW. The main framework related to language as a higher mental function is examined, both main psycholinguistic trends - nativism and environmentalism, as well as the organization of linguistic processes in oral and written language - are well presented. Attention is also paid to language development as a unity between the interaction of internal and external factors. The

author skillfully presents the ontogenesis of mastering the oral language. In this first chapter, the disorders of the language and especially the disorders of its development are discussed - manifestations, factors of occurrence, types, the concept of "specific language disorders" is also touched upon - nature, etiology, theoretical models, forms and signs. The theoretical presentation shows the in-depth knowledge of the doctoral student on the researched topic. Attention has also been paid to the disorders of mastering the written language and the manifestations of developmental dyslexia. The presentation is also targeted through the section "Secondary language disorders and influence of socio-psychological factors on language development".

The first chapter continues with the presentation of bilingualism as a phenomenology and manifestations. The exposition is clear, precise and multidimensionally presented. The classifications of bilingualism are also well presented. As a supporter of modern classifiers, I am satisfied with the presentation of language disorders and developmental dyslexia to and through them (ICD-11; DSM – V). I think this part would have a more contemporary sound if attention was also paid to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organization (ICF, WHO, 2007) and how bilingualism is positioned there to support the inclusion of multilingualism in the process of scientific reasoning. Chapter One concludes with a description of bilingualism and its impact on speaking, writing, and reading, and the relationship between specific language impairment, developmental dyslexia, and bilingualism. The exhibition is well supplemented with data from both Bulgarian and foreign sources. I believe that the dissertation would gain more if a brief description of the spoken and written Bulgarian language, as well as the literacy methods characteristic of our educational system, were made, i.e. it is good to single out such a subsection in the theoretical overview. This would lead to more in-depth interpretations in relation to the obtained research results. All the analyzes presenting the Bulgarian reality make a good impression.

In Chapter Two DESIGN THE RESEARCH, the goals, tasks, hypotheses, contingent, methodology and methods of the scientific research are described, as well as the methods used for statistical processing. The tasks are formulated precisely and clearly, which led to the logical structure of the exhibition. The hypotheses correspond to the stated objectives. Participants in the study were 48 bilingual students /EG/ and a control group of 30 monolingual students. The presented characteristics of bilingual children with regard to the second language also make a good impression. The methodology and methods of the scientific research are described in detail and clearly. In the study of writing under dictation, the way in which errors are analyzed is also

presented, which is important, since the doctoral student in the third chapter discusses and structures them on different levels.

The PhD student shows very good skills in planning, organizing and conducting experimental research. When presenting the statistical methods, the program with which the data were processed is described.

In the third chapter of the dissertation - ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTED DATA - the quantitative and qualitative processing of the data, statistical processing, analyzes of the results, conclusions and recommendations of the experimental research are presented. In these parts of the dissertation, Gergana Ilieva shows good skills in presenting the results and their consistent interpretation. A good impression is also made by the fact that at the beginning of this part the data from the Quantitative and qualitative analysis of a survey card of the parents of bilingual students living abroad and information about those of Roma origin are provided.

In the sections: section 2.1. Comparative analysis of the total result of sample 1, 2, 3 and 4; section 2.2. Comparative analysis of the overall result of the reading and writing tests between EG and CG for oral language between EG and CG; section "2.3. Comparative intragroup analysis between the oral and written language of EG and CG" and section "2.4. Comparative analysis and interrelationship between oral and written language achievements in EG and CG", makes a very good impression handling the obtained rich base of data and the ability to analyze and discuss the results obtained. The interpretation of these results involved a number of statistical methods, which provided clarity on the differences between children with bilingualism and those with monolingualism. In addition to the percentage presentation of the results, the correlation analysis (ANOVA) and the Student-t test were also applied. The reliability of the samples through Cronbach's Alpha reveals the good capabilities provided by the structured diagnostic tool used in the dissertation.

The description and systematization of the mistakes made in the writing of children with bilingualism is also noteworthy in Gergana Ilieva's work. The discussion in the dissertation is very well presented, including a number of modern studies and comparisons between children with mono- and bilingualism in comparison with the data from the dissertation work. The conclusions and recommendations made by Gergana Ilieva at the end of the dissertation fully reflect what was stated in the previous chapters of this dissertation.

The conclusion is thorough and purposeful.

#### **4. Theoretical and scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation:**

This dissertation contributes by empirically examining the relationship between oral achievement and written language achievement in children with bilingualism by proving it. These contributions are especially important for Bulgarian researchers, since the only language that the children speak is Bulgarian. As the doctoral student notes, in the future the research tools can be standardized and used in the practice of speech therapists who work with bilingual students, which will support them in making a direct impact on the most affected areas in oral and written language.

A strength of the dissertation work are the contributions aimed at practice and recommendations for parents and teachers of bilingual children.

#### **5. Author's abstract**

The abstract fully reflects the content of the dissertation and meets the requirements. Selectively cited authors are correctly represented in the bibliography.

#### **6. Publications**

On the topic of the dissertation, the doctoral student presents a list of a total of 4 publications, which meets the required minimum.

#### **7. Notes, recommendations and questions**

My notes and directions to the doctoral student were already expressed at the internal presentation to the department, and I am very positively impressed by their compliance with the basic requirements.

I would like to ask the doctoral student to answer the following question:

Since in the presented recommendations at the end of the dissertation, Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva presents these guidelines for working with bilingual children and students in a more general plan, would she bring out such recommendations in greater concreteness for the individual groups - carriers of bilingualism - in connection with their achievements, cultural and socio-economic characteristics?

## **8. Conclusion**

The PhD student shows very good theoretical preparation and skills for organizing and conducting scientific research. The in-depth processing of the obtained data is the basis for deriving reasoned analyzes and conclusions, which have contributions in both theoretical and practical-applied terms.

**The presented dissertation work should be evaluated on its merits as I give a positive assessment and I strongly suggest to the respected Scientific Jury that Gergana Ilieva-Zlatareva be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Logopedics).**

27.04.2024

Reviewer:

*/Associate Professor Katerina Shtereva/*