

## **REVIEW**

**of dissertation on the topic: “Interrelationship between disorders of the oral and the written language in bilingual students for awarding the educational and scientific degree PhD in professional field**

### **1.2. Pedagogy (Logopedics)**

**PhD student: Gergana Plamenova Ilieva - Zlatareva**

**Research supervisor: Prof. Tzvetanka Tzenova, DSc**

**Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Diana Ignatova, PhD**

Gergana Plamenova Ilieva-Zlatareva, a candidate for the Ph degree, has a bachelor's and master's degree in Logopedics from the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. She actively practicing her profession from the time of her graduation to the present moment, taking part in a number of professional forums, courses and training seminars, internship practices. I note these facts in support of the compliance of the PhD student's application with the nature of the announced procedure for the acquisition of the educational-scientific degree in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Logopedics).

Regarding this, I express a positive assessment of the professional development of Gergana Zlatareva, considering that this self-reflexivity ensures her personal development and professional self-improvement in the direction of acquiring new theoretical knowledge, practical skills and linking them with the research experience, which in practice finds its implementation in the research work under consideration.

The presented opinion follows the main requirements confirmed during the discussion of a dissertation for the acquisition of the PhD educational-scientific degree.

### **1. Arguments for starting the defense of the dissertation. Description of the presented materials**

The title of the paper presupposes an orientation to a research program related to the acquisition of professional experience and ideas.

The aim of the dissertation work is to establish the interrelationship between oral and written language disorders in bilingual students. The topic stems from the controversial sociolinguistic situation in which Europe currently finds, and in particular the Bulgarian state. In this regard, changing language policies and public attitudes towards them in the conditions of bilingualism or multilingualism are an extremely actual problem and a starting point for scientific research in this context.

In view of the new realities, legislative, ethnolinguistic and lingua-cultural issues that are important for every state, a member of the European Union should be put in focus. In this regard, the PhD student manages to link the educational visions of child development by outlining the actuality of the topic and the need of researches in the field of bilingualism and multilingualism with a focus on the difficulties experienced by children and students in the process of language mastery, literacy and school learning.

## **2. Content and qualities of the dissertation thesis**

The presented dissertation thesis is in the volume of 145 standard typewritten pages of text, 10 pages of bibliographic reference and 8 pages of appendices, as well as a list of publications devoted to the subject of the dissertation. The work is well structured. It includes one theoretical chapter, one chapter that describes the methodology of the experimental work, one chapter with the analysis of the research results, conclusions and recommendations, general conclusion, contributions, bibliographic reference and appendices.

The balanced presentation between the theoretical (chapter one in a volume of 72 pages) and the methodological-research part (chapter two in a volume of 71 pages) and a description of the theoretical-applied aspects and contributions of the dissertation in a volume of 5 pages is impressive.

108 references were studied (67 in Bulgarian, 37 in English and 4 internet sites), and interpretations of established classical authors in the field of the title were posed, as well as contemporary ones. This gives reason to assume that Gergana Zlatareva has carefully

and thoroughly studied the topic she is considering. The content of the dissertation is systematic, which creates an impression of clarity in the interpretation of the issues. It is appropriate to include an index to the tables and figures in the table of contents.

Chapter I is divided into three main paragraphs. The first aims to build a theoretical basis of the language system. The dichotomous concept language-speech is discussed. The second paragraph is devoted to disorders of oral and written language and in particular to disorders of reading and writing, the purpose of which is to clarify and consistently direct attention to the focus of the dissertation development and more specifically the interrelationship between disorders of oral and written language in students with bilingualism. The last paragraph in this chapter takes on the meaning of a central theoretical construct in the exposition, as it brings into discussion the concept of "bilingualism". The literature review is presented consistently and systematically, with an adequate academic writing style. The recommendation in this chapter is related to the need the PhD student to demonstrate skills for critical analysis of existing scientific knowledge in the area of the discussed problem. In connection with this, the literature review would be better if it propose more conclusions, summaries and conclusions of paradigms, concepts, ideas and judgments.

Here it should be noted as a positive point Gergana Ilieva's ability to operate with multiple theoretical constructs, which shows her good theoretical training.

The second chapter of the dissertation thesis presents the research program - goals, tasks, hypotheses, research participants. The research methodology is described in detail. The main goal is "to evaluate and assess the oral and written language of bilingual and monolingual students in the 2nd and 3rd grades, as well as to determine how difficulties in the oral language affect the mastery of writing and reading" (p. 73 in the dissertation).

Therefore, one of the main goals of the study is to determine how the oral language disorders affect the mastery of the reading and writing processes. Infact the study looked for a correlation between oral language disorders and subsequent difficulties in written language. In connection with this, the methodology of the study was constructed.

Chapter III presents a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the obtained results, accompanied by conclusions corresponding to the data. Empirical data are subjected to statistical analysis that proves their value. The obtained results, their credibility and the manner of their discussion are presented consistently in accordance with the general methodology of the research towards the realization of the set goals and tasks. The attached tables, figures and diagrams appropriately visualize the parameters set by the PhD student. It can be said that on the basis of the used methods for qualitative evaluation - analysis, synthesis, summary, comparison, Gergana Ilieva managed to establish dependencies and interrelationships embedded in the hypothesis and the experimental program.

Here the following notes could be done:

- From the quantitative and qualitative analysis, it is not clear what percentage of the investigated persons of Roma origin communicate in a home environment in their mother tongue and what is the percentage of persons who communicate bilingually. These data would provide an opportunity for a qualitative analysis in relation to the factors influencing the level of language competence in these two subgroups
- Based on the results of the quantitative analysis, as it was noted by the PhD student, high values of standard deviation are reported, which is an indicator of the heterogeneity of the distribution of the results for each of the samples and in general for the bilingual students compared to the monolingual group. The reason is the heterogeneous nature of the individuals in the experimental group (children of Roma origin, bilingual children living in Bulgaria and bilinguals living abroad), functioning in the conditions of different environmental factors. (family, economic, frequency and duration of attendance at educational institutions, etc.) It can be assumed that this fact has a negative impact when delineating trends and make comparative analyzes within the experimental and control groups.

Regarding the scientific values of the dissertation thesis, it should be noted that the appropriate construction of the goal presupposes the contributing moments of the work. The studies devoted to the development of language competences in bilingual children and the accompanying disorders of language development, are few in number, as well as there is a complete lack of studies that establish the interrelationship between oral

and written language disorders in bilingual students. With regard to this, the thesis developed by Gergana Zlatareva has a scientific value with a research and applied contribution. It presents original experimental data, on the basis of which conclusions are reached and hypotheses are confirmed.

The abstract is an accurate reflection of the dissertation as it includes methodological basics and the contributions of the dissertation.

The PhD student's publications reflect key moments in the development of the dissertation research.

### **Conclusion**

The discussed dissertation work in terms of design, method of presentation, processing and analysis of the data, as well as with its contributions, satisfies the requirements of the Law on Scientific Degrees and Titles. This gives me a reason to propose to the Honorable Scientific Jury to award Gergana Ilieva - Zlatareva the educational and scientific degree PhD in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Logopedics), which I will also support through this opinion.

April 30, 2024

Sofia

Reviewer:.....

/Assoc. prof. Diana Ignatova, PhD/