

REVIEW

Of the Dissertation Project for the award of the Scientific and Educational Degree "PhD" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (special pedagogy) - on the topic:

Optimizing English language training of students with mild mental retardation in elementary school age

Author: Violeta Dimitrova Halacheva

Scientific adviser: Prof. Milen Zamfirov

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Neda Balkanska

General description of the submitted materials

*By order of RD No. 38-360 of 08.07.2022, I was designated as a member of the Scientific Jury for providing a procedure for the protection of dissertation on the topic "Optimizing English language training of students with mild mental retardation in elementary school age "- for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (special pedagogy). **The author of the dissertation work is Violeta Dimitrova Halacheva** - PhD student of independent preparation for the Department of Special Pedagogy, with a **scientific leader Prof. Milen Zamfirov** from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski. "*

The set by Violeta Dimitrova Halacheva, materials on an electronic medium indicates that the candidate has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the ZRASRB.

General submission of the applicant. Educational and scientific status.

Violeta Halacheva graduated from the bachelor's degree in 2016 as a graduate of New Bulgarian University with a professional qualification "Philologist-Teacher in German". In 2018 she gained a master's degree at Sofia University "St. Kliment

Ohridski ", FCNF with professional qualification" Philologist-Englishman with a profile "Literature and Media". Since 2020 he has been a *doctoral student of independent preparation for FNI, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "*, Department of Special Pedagogy"

Her professional career begins as *a teacher at CSFL* at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ", where courses in German for adults and students and English for adults, for the period 2016-2020 from 2020, after a competition, became an *assistant to the FESA, Sofia University" St. Kl. Ohridski "*, Department of Elementary School Pedagogy.

Actuality of the dissertation work.

Children with mild mental retardation are an important part of the group of students with SEN, who are trained in general education institutions. This puts the mass teachers in the challenge of meeting the specific needs of this group of children and at the same time offering quality training to all other participants in the educational process. This difficult task can find its solution by adapting the pedagogical approach of teachers and applying new methodologies to the education to be addressed to the diverse needs of students in the modern classroom. Linguistic training (in particular foreign language learning) is one of the educational fields that require great attention in this regard.

In this sense, *the topic of this development is characterized by a pronounced relevance* for the modern scientific and practical sphere.

Structure of the dissertation work. The dissertation work has a volume of 180 pages and contains an introduction, four chapters, conclusion and application. The literary reference includes titles in Cyrillic and Latin.

The theoretical staging of the problem is structured in **two chapters**. *The basic terminological variations* related to the theme of the dissertation are presented; The principles and specific methods of education of students with mild mental retardation. Against this background, *the peculiarities of working with text in the foreign language* education that underlie foreign language teaching is revealed. The

text is considered on several levels: as a means of forming functional literacy and communicative competence. In addition, *the difficulties encountered by students with mild mental retardation* in the process of reflection and surgery with the various text components.

The design of the empirical examination contains *goals, tasks and a hypothesis*. The hypothesis is predictable and should be formulated more neutral and globally. *The contingent of the study* includes 40 students with mild mental retardation from Sofia and Pazardzhik, who are the subject of additional support to the regional centers to support the inclusive education process. *A finding and forming experiment was conducted* with the application of a training program.

The text of the abstract *reflects credibly the contents of the dissertation*. It is in a volume of 36 computer pages, which allows you to include additional key information from the scientific development that will reach a wider readership.

There are three publications on the topic of the dissertation *that meet the scientometric requirements for the dissertation works*.

The contributions with the scientific-attached nature of the reviewed work are as follows:

1. The theoretical information related to the peculiarities in foreign language education of students with mild mental retardation is systematized and analyzed;
2. An intervention program is applied, the principles of which can be applied in a wider perimeter by specialists in special and general education institutions, as well as adapt to persons with other violations;
3. Specific components of the training program may also become part of the procedures for attesting the achievements of children with SEN in the field of foreign language learning.

My recommendations and notes are as follows:

1. To refine the use of some concepts - e.g. p. 5 and p. 29 - children with specific educational needs; And those borrowed from foreign language scientific literature - e.g. On page 75- Instead of "shrinking" the text, a "reduction, adaptation or shortening" of the text can be used, on page 77, instead of "design of a scaffold", "Creating a supporting training framework of resources and activities" can be used.
2. To observe the principles of the constructive experiment, in which the test materials for the entrance and starting level are the same for all participants in the study, and the forming experiment shall be conducted only with the representatives of the control group;
3. To formulate the results related to the demonstrated level for the respective groups within the final ascertaining experiment;
4. The analysis of the results of all stages of the study should be brought into chapter fourth. In the third chapter to present only the description of the experiment and the statistical methods for processing empirical data;
5. Although statistical methods are described in chapter fourth, most empirical results are presented only in a percentage, which reduces the conviction of the analysis and its conclusions;
6. There is a repetition of whole paragraphs- e.g. The text from pp. 93-96 is repeated on pp. 98-101;

I have the following **question** to the doctoral student:

What are the specifics of the proposed experimental model that distinguishes it from traditional foreign language training?

CONCLUSION

I offer the *Respected Scientific Jury* to award Violeta Dimitrova Halacheva *Educational and Scientific Degree "PhD" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical science, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Special pedagogy)*.

21.09.2022.

Sofia

Reviewer:

(Prof. Dr. N. Balkanska)