

REVIEW

by Professor Angel Marinov Petrov, PhD -

lecturer at the Faculty of Slavonic Philology of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

of a dissertation for acknowledging the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences

professional field 1. 3. Pedagogy of Teaching . . . (Methodology of teaching Bulgarian)

PhD Programme "Methodology of Teaching Bulgarian Language and Literature"

Author: Nataliya Ivanova Matseva

Topic: "Developing the key competence "Learning Skill" by working with a text in Bulgarian language education (5th - 7th grade)"

Scientific supervisor. Associate Professor Fani Evgenieva Boykova, PhD, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

Description of the submitted materials

By Order No. RD-21-541 from 15. 03. 2023 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to provide a procedure for the defence of a dissertation on "Developing the key competence Learning Skill" by working with a text in Bulgarian language education (5th - 7th grade)" for the acquisition the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1. 3. Pedagogy of teaching in. . . (Methodology of Teaching Bulgarian Language), PhD programme "Methodology of Teaching Bulgarian Language and Literature". The author of the dissertation is Nataliya Ivanova Matseva - a PhD student at the Department of Bulgarian Literature and Theory of Literature with scientific supervisor Associate Professor Fani Evgenieva Boykova, PhD from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

The set of paper materials presented by Nataliya Ivanova Matseva is in accordance with art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" and includes the following documents:

1. an application to the Rector of the Plovdiv University to disclose the procedure for the defence of a dissertation work;
2. a CV in European format;
3. a protocol from the Council department related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
4. an abstract of a dissertation;
5. a declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
6. certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
7. a list of the scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation;
8. dissertation work;
9. copies of scientific publications;
10. a document for a paid fee, according to the Tariff;
11. a set of documents on paper from point 1 to point 10 – 3 pieces/CDs/
12. a set of documents from points 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 – 7 pieces.

The PhD student has attached 7 articles - scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation work.

Biographical data for the PhD student

Nataliya Ivanova Matseva was born on August 28th, 1976. During the period 1994-2000, she studied higher education for bachelor's and master's degrees in the major Bulgarian & Russian at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". From 2004 to 2006 she studied at "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo, where she graduated with a master's degree in Finance. Since 2019 she has been a part-time PhD student at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The professional path of Natalia Ivanova Matseva is dedicated to the educational sphere. In the period 1999 - 2000, she was a Russian language teacher at "Ivan Vazov" Elementary School in Plovdiv. Since 2010 she has been a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature at "St. Paisii Hilendarski" Secondary School in the city of Plovdiv.

General characteristics of the dissertation work

The dissertation research on the topic "Development of the key competence "Skill for learning" in working with a text in Bulgarian language education (5th - 7th grade)" with author Nataliya Ivanova Matseva presents ideas, theses, reasoning and methodological options for pedagogical activities related to *original* and *contemporary* scientific issues for the modern socio-cultural and educational context. The definition of the so-called "key competences" as the leading objectives of education in various school subjects in secondary schools leads to the necessity to understand and scientifically comprehend the essence, functions and opportunities for acquiring knowledge and abilities through the application of the competence approach in the classroom. Nataliya Matseva directs her research interest to students' mastery of one of the competencies - "Learning skill" - in a relatively short period of studying Bulgarian language and Literature - the lower stage of secondary school (5th - 7th grade). The text-based approach is used as the main pedagogical tool for solving the tasks of the study, which provides opportunities for purposeful and multi-layered pedagogical practical activity to improve the cognitive skills of the students. The author's ideas are innovative and thoroughly scientifically based, and the professional level of teaching, which is evident from the presented particular descriptions of fragments of lessons, is a proof that the reviewed dissertation work has significance for the theory and practice of teaching methodology of Bulgarian language as a scientific discipline.

Natalia Matseva's motivation for choosing the topic of the dissertation is clearly outlined in the *introductory part* of the text. These are the new realities of life that give rise to a "collision" between the young person and reality, the social-communicative needs of adolescent students, the need for changes in the traditional educational environment, which should be reconstructed in such a way as to create conditions for developing actively thinking and learning individuals. Nataliya Matseva's professional practice as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature gives her the reason to say that "the better the learner's ability to learn is developed, the easier it is for them to progress in mastering new knowledge and competences in any other area" (p. 4). In the beginning of the dissertation, the author's conviction is evident that the teaching of Bulgarian language in secondary school is precisely the time and place when and where optimal educational conditions are created for developing competencies that will help to the greatest extent for the intellectual growth of students and will create prerequisites for their future personal maturation and successful socialization after graduating school.

In the initial part of the dissertation, the *object* and the *subject* of the research are precisely and clearly defined, the goal is indicated and decomposed into specific research *tasks*. The fragment of the text entitled "Methodology of the experimental work" is a micro-model of the entire study. Here,

the framework of the research stages is outlined and the criteria areas are distinguished, which reflect the essence of mastered learning skills - skills for selecting and evaluating information; skills in using other learning resources; note-taking skills; presentation and self-presentation skills; skills for reflection and self-reflection (p. 8 – 9). In the next part (Chapter Two), which can be defined as the conceptual core of the work, a methodological system of goals, learning content and pedagogical tools is constructed to develop each specific type of the specified learning skills. The systematic entirety proposed there has both theoretical and practical value for the teaching of Bulgarian language, as well as for language teaching in general. The abilities of the PhD student to model methodological systems with heuristic and prognostic significance are a testimony to her profound theoretical training and to her creative abilities. Even here, in the first parts of the dissertation, the author's skills to clearly and logically structure a scientific text are evident.

In the *first chapter* of the dissertation, the scientific foundations of the research are concerned. Important problems, developing basic elements of the modern educational paradigm, are examined from a theoretical and from a practical point of view. These are, for example, the following: *competence approach*, *key competence "Skill for learning"* in the context of the modern pedagogical process, *communicative orientation* of the current education in Bulgarian language, *activity approach oriented to the text and to the discourse* in the education in native language. For the purposes of the specific study, ideas and theories about language, about language education, about the text and about the discourse, are interpreted in detail in the works of Bulgarian and foreign pedagogues, linguists, specialists in Bulgarian language teaching methodology (K. Dimchev, V. Krastanova, P. Garusheva, R. Tankova, M. Kunali, M. Swain, etc.). A critical analysis is made of the propositions that form the basis for the forthcoming PhD research. In this part of the dissertation, the referential approach is predominant, but the skills of analysis are evident in many places, and this is done from an evaluative methodological stance. Activity strategies and theses that are directly related to solving the tasks of the specific study are skilfully and convincingly justified. It is noteworthy that the thoroughly presented scientific facts, processes and regularities are interpreted through the prism of basic statements in national educational documents such as the Preschool and School Education Act, Ordinance No. 5 on the general education of students, etc. The author's information and findings are evidence of her broad theoretical awareness and her professional skills not only to discover and present facts, but also to interpret the content of the facts with a view to their appropriate use for the purposes of the specific scientific search.

The second and third chapters of the dissertation are central to the study. Here are Natalia Matseva's ideas and suggestions for learning activities regarding the approaches, methods and

techniques for developing the key competence "Skill for learning", applied in the specific teaching activity of teachers and students during Bulgarian lessons language. In these parts of the work, the main points of contribution to the theory and practice of teaching in Bulgarian language, which are the work of the PhD candidate, stand out. The work created by Natalia Matseva, modestly named by herself as "Methodological ideas and practices", undoubtedly has the signs of a scientifically based and precisely presented *methodological system* with theoretical and practical components. Each element of the five criteria areas related to the mastery of learning skills (areas, already noted at the beginning of this review) is interpreted in detail at the motivational, content, functional, textual, and activity levels. The specific methodological approaches used within the framework of the conducted educational experiment (also described in detail in the dissertation) are indicated. Relevant conclusions have been drawn about the students' progress in relation to the results of the applied activities for mastering and developing their reading skills through the educational work in the Bulgarian language classes. The ideas and reasoning of the PhD student are richly illustrated with tables containing data on the achievements of students, worksheets that reflect stages in the academic work, facsimiles of pages with specific texts, questions and tasks, many of them test-like, diagrams, etc. Special attention is given to the results of the work with *mind maps*, which is particularly relevant for today's educational practices in secondary schools. The use of mind maps in activities related to the perception and creation of texts is presented as a process that develops children's thinking and intensifies learning processes in an educational context. The attached fragments of a Bulgarian language lesson on "Complex forms of verb tenses" with the help of mind maps is a proof of the effectiveness of this educational technique, through which the goals of communicatively oriented education of Bulgarian language are successfully implemented and the skills of adolescent to accumulate knowledge and develop their intellect are developed and improved.

Special attention in the dissertation is paid to the set of characteristics of the educational environment, which create optimal conditions for increasing the cognitive activity of the students. Pedagogical and methodological perspectives on the use of the positive and supportive classroom, e-learning, collaborative teaching, brainstorming and game situations as means of pedagogical interaction are analyzed in detail. In each of the mentioned components of the educational context, the emphasis is placed on practical aspects in the use of pedagogical teaching tools, aimed at making more dynamic the cognitive processes of students and extracting positives for their intellectual maturation. In addition, regular connections and relationships with other elements of the pedagogical paradigm are sought and discovered, the activation of which increases the chances of successful implementation of the considered processes. Thus, for example, when interpreting the possibilities of the positive and supportive classroom for developing students' cognitive abilities, important points of

contact between language and literary education are analyzed (see the description of fragments of a lesson in the 6th grade on Ivan Vazov's poem "Dear fatherland, how beautiful you are!" - p. 83-84); when presenting the characteristics of co-teaching, opportunities are sought to apply an interdisciplinary approach, through which to develop both the emotional intelligence of adolescents and their learning abilities (see the description of fragments of a co-teaching lesson in Bulgarian language and Music in connection with the topics of the study content "Adverb" and "Tempo" respectively - p. 102 - 104); when presenting the brainstorming as an opportunity for learning, the possibilities of other modern interactive methods are analyzed to lead to the activation of the students' cognitive activity and to create conditions for raising the level of their language training (see p. 107 - 109) and etc. In the presentation of each of the mentioned elements of the educational environment, Nataliya Matseva approaches with the research skills of a professionally trained teacher who possesses well-developed qualities of a pragmatically oriented pedagogue, linguist and methodologist.

In the fourth and final chapter of the dissertation, the data from the empirical research on the possibilities of developing and improving the key competence "Learning skill" in the Bulgarian language classes by working on texts in the lower stage of secondary school education are described and analyzed. The results of the conducted experimental training have been studied in detail. The conclusions drawn prove the correctness of the author's pre-formulated theses - with all criteria and indicators that are consistent with the areas of competence - knowledge, skills and attitudes, the empirical data obtained testify to the progress of the students in accordance with the set goals and with expected results. Data are presented in both tabular and graphical form. The pedagogical analysis of the data is done using mathematical research methods.

Natalia Matseva's dissertation work is written in a clear and correct scientific language and style.

The work is richly illustrated with appendices that complement the informativeness of the main presentation.

The publications on the topic of the dissertation are sufficient in number - 7 issues. They convincingly present the author's main ideas and theses in various specialized scientific publications

The abstract corresponds exactly to the content of the dissertation research and has all the structural and functional features of this type of scientific genre.

Contributing points in the dissertation

Until now, the problem of developing the key competence "Skill for learning" by working with the text in Bulgarian language classes has not been the subject of independent original scientific research.

Criteria have been developed that reflect the essence of learning skill. Indicators related to designed specific learning objectives are assigned to each criterion.

The elements of a methodical system for mastering learning skills by working on a text have been constructed.

I accept the reference with contributions formulated by the PhD student.

Recommendation

I recommend publishing the text of the dissertation as a monograph. I am convinced that it will find its readers among university professors, teachers and students of philological disciplines.

Conclusion

The dissertation contains theoretical and practical results which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of LDASRB and the corresponding Regulations of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The dissertation work shows that the PhD student Natalia Ivanova Matseva possesses profound theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific field "Methods of Bulgarian language teaching", demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "PhD" /Doctor of Philosophy/ to Nataliya Ivanova Matseva in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching ... (Methodology of teaching Bulgarian), doctoral program "Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature".

31st March 2023

Reviewer:

Prof. Angel Petrov, PhD

