

REVIEW

From Radoslav Dimitrov Radev,
prof. dr. at University of Veliko Tarnovo 'St. St. Cyril and Methodius'

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree 'doctor'

by: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences

professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in...

doctoral program Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature

Author: Nataliya Ivanova Matseva

Theme: Developing of key competence "learning ability" when working with text in Bulgarian language education (grades 5-7).

Research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fani Evgenieva Boykova

(academic degree, scientific degree, first name, middle name, last name - university or scientific organization)

1. General description of the presented materials

With order No RD-21-541 from 15.03.2023 of the Rector of University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for defense of a dissertation work with theme "Development of key competence "learning ability" when working with text in Bulgarian language education (grades 5-7)" for acquisition of educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in..., doctoral program Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature. The author of the dissertation is Nataliya Ivanova Matseva - a doctoral student in external form of education at the Department of Bulgarian Literature and Literary Theory with supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fani Evgenieva Boykova from University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski"

The set of paper materials presented by Nataliya Ivanova Matseva is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of Rules for Development of Academic Staff of University of Plovdiv, includes the following documents:

- a request to the Rector of University of Plovdiv to disclose the procedure for defense of a dissertation work;
- curriculum vitae in European format;
- protocol from the departmental council related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;

- dissertation work;
 - author's summary;
 - a list of scientific publications on the subject of dissertation;
 - copies of scientific publications;
 - list of noticed citations;
 - declaration of originality and authenticity of attached documents;
 - a certificate of compliance with the specific requirements of the relevant faculty.
- The doctoral student has attached 7 articles that are in prestigious publications and with correctly presented bibliographic data.

2. Brief biographical data for the doctoral student.

Doctoral student Nataliya Ivanova Matseva graduated subject Bulgarian and Russian languages at University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", she has a master's degree in finance, was a teacher in Russian language, and from 2010 till nowadays she is a teacher in Bulgarian language and literature at highschool "Paisii Hilendarski", Plovdiv. Since 2019, she has been a doctoral student in the Department of "Bulgarian Literature and Literary Theory", she graduated in 2022. The dissertation was submitted ahead of schedule, and no plagiarism was detected in it. The research was conducted over three academic years and was completed in the 5th-7th cycle class, which gives a good opportunity to follow the results of the experiment. The internal defense of dissertation at the department "Bulgarian Literature and Literary Theory" is impressive, extremely rich in ideas and perceptions. Importantly, the question of the practical applicability of the methods in the dissertation is discussed, as it is a key issue. Thanks to the teaching experience as a characteristic of the work, we should note the good synthesis between theoretical knowledge and pedagogical experience. Therefore, we can say about Natalia Matseva that she created her days.

3. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks

The importance of scientific thesis is that learning is taken as a tool not only for acquiring knowledge, but presents the necessary arguments to achieve the goals. This is a new thesis, in my opinion quite productive, since the accumulation of knowledge can lead to problematic blindness if what is learned is not activated as an argument for subsequent thinking and communicative activity. That is why Nataliya Matseva activates texts from different spheres of communication, as texts are a diverse linguistic structure that allows obtaining not only linguistic information, but also a quick change of viewpoints that activates dialogicity. And this means not only mastering skills, but also the pleasure of applying them. Reconciling the motivation to learn and the enjoyment of it is difficult, but it contains the sweet foreboding that if you love the moon, you will know the sun. Precisely because

of this, the text is not direct knowledge, but a path to it so that the person knows himself. In this sense, Nataliya Matseva asserts that the formation of competence is a process and not the ultimate goal of education, because the skill is not static, but irritability and increased sensitivity, through which language acquisition is a form of discovering the world.

4. Knowing the problem.

Natalia Matseva has solid scientific training on the problem, knows how to coordinate and at the same time set boundaries between the institutional, scientific and methodical introduction of the problem, so that the system she builds is clear and the competences formed are functional for practice. That is why she considers the key competence "Skill to learn" and believes that the communicative feature of learning can be achieved through its "text-centric focus". I am slightly surprised by the term "text-centricity" (p.31) and more precisely by the way it is used, since it contains the essence of the thesis, but also the contradiction, since the text as a condensation of the method really centers the learning, but in its essence it is a cultural and communicative phenomenon that stands above method. However, this contradiction is realized by the doctoral student and I would even say that she skilfully takes advantage of it in the methodological decisions that were made, even more so when she uses the possibilities of reflection and self-reflection.

5. Research methodology

The chosen research methodology is functional, since the theoretical development of the problem is carried out on the principle of the correlation between the separate statements about the competences, even through their correlation to the abilities. This allows her to achieve a new characteristic of methodological units and the lesson system not only within one school year, but throughout the course of junior high school education. This means that the effectiveness of the applied approach is also thought of as a perspective of the competence "Skill to learn". In this I also see the optimism in the use of its strategies - to think of competencies as current opportunities and as perspectives of the built skills. The use of the survey method gives a good orientation to the effectiveness of the applied methods.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work

Nataliya Matseva's dissertation work is built in four chapters, in which the theoretical statements about the competences, the strategies for building the "Skill for learning", the techniques for increasing the activity of the students and the analysis of the recorded results are given in sequence. All this within 207 pages with appendices and a considerably rich bibliography. There are no discrepancies in the scientific thesis, the diversity of techniques is a form of coherence, and the imagination of the teacher "mediator" generates the wonder of the students, which incites their

activity. In the first chapter, the graduate has shown her skill for scientific research and for systematization, she justifies why the "Skill to learn" should be understood as a key competence and why it can be used to master the other competences. At the same time, she assumes that competencies are in a dynamic relationship, as they mutually penetrate and complement each other. The functionality of the "Skill to learn" is expressed in the fact that it is motivated learning and in this sense, according to Natalia Matseva, it is a "meta-ability", as it is the basis of the student's overall development (p. 22). The use of the term "meta-ability" is not accidental, but very well thought out, since the formation of competences through knowledge and skills cannot and should not be thought beyond the abilities that are an individual characteristic of the personality. Nataliya Matseva's insight does not allow her to stay only with institutional decisions about competences, but also to be based on what the student carries within himself. It gives life to the already established idea in language learning about the use of communicative situations and justifies why they should be achieved through the use of the text, through which not only linguistic information can be given, but also a cultural basis for personality development. For this purpose, the graduate uses what has already been achieved in the methodology by Kiril Dimchev, Angel Petrov, Vanya Krastanova, Fani Boykova, Dimka Dimitrova, Despina Vasileva, Maya Padezhka, Margarita Georgieva and others. The introduced map for achieving the Learning Skill is based on the trinity: tools, reflections, self-control, which makes it clear that the learning skill is also a psychology of learning. Concentration and reflection are the two paths to critical thinking that are the most difficult to achieve, and the graduate has rightly focused her attention on them. In the second chapter "Development of learning skills when working with text in Bulgarian language classes from 5th to 7th grade (Methodological ideas and practices)", the doctoral student proceeds from the extremely important thesis about the need to master information. Knowledge and information are in a dialectical relationship, but the former requires concentration and contemplation, and the latter - information, is required today with speed, which is why knowledge slips away before it is structured. That is why Nataliya Matseva writes about "selection of information" (p.35) and all the techniques she proposes are actually slowing down the speed so that the system can be born from the facts in the students' knowledge. In this regard, the project "Evoking Superpowers" (p. 48-52) is very impressive and effective. In my opinion, a successful teacher will be one who manages to reduce the speed of learning. Nataliya Matseva's dissertation offers forms and techniques of communication through which the student assimilates information - note-taking, mind map, presentation, which are precisely a way to systematize knowledge, then comes reflection and self-reflection, which turn the information to the student's personality. Thus "to" becomes "through" in the natural rhythm of analysis and synthesis. These views of the doctoral student are protected with specific examples from methodological developments of lessons. She is very good at detailing and breaking down individual activities that have clear wording, such as the note-taking technique (pp. 54-56). The sketch notes are a very original idea, but it is not clear why there is a limiting point for them - to be used by children who have an attraction to fine arts and in the field of natural sciences. (p.55) In the

third chapter "Importance of the educational environment for increasing the cognitive activity of students" the doctoral student is the most resourceful. First of all, I should note that it has a special relation to the good mood of students, created by positive emotions. She sees the positive and supportive classroom precisely through the expression of emotions. But contrary to Nietzsche, who, in his commandment "Create a mood!", also sees the danger of losing the arguments for a given statement, Nataliya Matseva finds in a good mood precisely the birth of a need and pleasure from arguing (p.85). Sort of like gathering good energies. Second: in the requirement of text-centrism, she also has in mind the connection of Bulgarian language learning with the literature curriculum, which is consistently demonstrated in the dissertation. The work on the fairy tale "The Three Brothers and the Golden Apple" (p. 114-117) is particularly resourceful. It shows the incredible philological and methodological capacity of Natalia Matseva. the discovery of linguistic forms in folklore and literary text further opens and expands the understanding of the text. Third: it is a pleasure to read the part related to e-learning, because the PhD student does not dispute the quality of this type of learning - she accepts it as present and as a prospect. She illustrates some opportunities to influence the classroom environment in order to provoke interest in the learning process (p.89-90). The main privilege is that e-learning gives more freedom in choosing the forms, methods and tools of teaching. The PhD student made the most of this freedom. The amazing thing about Nataliya Matseva's work is that she does not create the sense of before and now, she does not look for a subject to deny in order to affirm innovations. The classic enters her interactions like flour into bread - it reinforces the essence. An example of this is joint teaching - a familiar and tested form for quite some time, but the resourceful connection of Bulgarian language learning with music gives rise to new ideas and different results (p.103-105). When using brainstorming, it introduces more psychology, which is why the intellectual search is experienced by the students, especially since besides logic, fantasy is also relied on (p.112). Nataliya Matseva takes the game first of all as game situations and this is an important finding, since in this way the game does not subordinate the lesson, but creates activities close to the life context. For this purpose, the doctoral student uses platforms and technologies, but still, in this fascination, it should be kept in mind that play for children is not only granted, but is self-recharging. Children create the game. Technology has turned children from creators of games into mere consumers of developed game forms. In the fourth chapter, "Results and analysis of empirical data", the functionality and effectiveness of the selected strategies are tracked according to individual criteria. Success is undeniable and presented in the best possible way. It is worth noting that students draw their own reasoning, become proactive and enterprising, which means that knowledge gives them vitality.

7. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

In Bulgarian methodology, the proposed initial competences were imposed institutionally, which is why there was a need to interpret them as strategies for learning the learning content in Bulgarian schools. It was reasonable to start with the communicative competence (Angel Petrov), and through the work of Nataliya Matseva, for the first time, a comprehensive development of the key

competence "Skill for learning" in teaching of Bulgarian language, which is actually a basis for mastering the other competences, is being done. The methodological combination of concreteness and systematicity has led to the development of an author's Map of the ability to learn, which highlights both the tools for effective management of the learning process and regulates the organization of learning process. It is particularly valuable to derive the parameters for measuring the key competence "Skill to learn", which make it possible to track the real effectiveness of the strategies used. The general concept of working with text is stable, which as a methodology is defined by the author as text-centrism, and in reality it is realized as a unity of teaching in Bulgarian language and in literature. The practical result of the proposed options for inter-subject and intra-subject integration gives reason to accept the study in Bulgarian as an opportunity to transfer knowledge and skills in different educational subjects. Thus, language learning guarantees the creation of activities in the learning of other subjects. The effect of knowledge spillover gives rise to persistence in learning and understanding knowledge. Without underestimating and ignoring the emotional characteristics of Bulgarian language learning, Nataliya Matseva has derived functional algorithms for mastering the individual techniques, which are affective, as they have been tested in the doctoral student's own methodological practice.

8. Assessment of dissertation publications

Nataliya Matseva presents seven articles that are thematically related to the dissertation. They have been published in prestigious publications and are already in scientific circulation. The publications present the key points of the dissertation, which is a good strategy for the doctoral student, as she was able to receive scientific opinions and judgments about what was achieved in the articles. The University of Plovdiv is honored to publish the magazine "The Word of the Young", which allows doctoral students to feel like a community. One of the publications is in the refereed journal "Bulgarian Language and Literature".

9. Personal participation of the doctoral student

The dissertation is an original scientific study, based on the in-depth use of theoretical sources and application of personal experience as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature, which gives authenticity to the obtained results.

10. Author's summary

The abstract accurately and conceptually reflects the dissertation. The achieved synthesis does not miss the key moments in the work, both at the level of theory and as a methodology of the chosen and practically implemented strategies.

11. Critical remarks and recommendations

The dissertation is conceptual and well structured with convincing examples, with own pedagogical experience exposed, which frees me from the need to make self-serving remarks to satisfy my own scientific ego.

12. Personal impressions

I don't have personal impressions.

13. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

Given the applicability of the proposed strategies, it would be beneficial for teachers the work to be published as a book.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science* and **and meet all** the requirements of the Law for Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Nataliya Ivanova Matseva **possesses** in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in scientific specialty Teaching Methodology in Bulgarian language, **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, author's summary, achieved results and contributions, and **I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor"** to Nataliya Ivanova Matseva in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in...doctoral program Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature.

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Reviewer:

(signature)

Prof. dr. Radoslav Radev

(academic position., scientific degree,
name, surname)