

OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Mihail Nikolov Prodanov, PhD

for the dissertation work of PhD student Elena Peneva Kortezova for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) on the topic: "Parental attitudes towards the language development of children with communicative disorders in preschool age (3-7 years)", field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program in "Pedagogical (Educational) and Developmental Psychology" – Faculty of Humanities of BFU. The PhD student studied in individual form, with a scientific supervisor Prof. Yonka Baltadjieva, PhD.

The opinion was prepared according to Art. 20 and Art. 21 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of BFU. By order UMO-19/03.10.22. of the Rector of BFU, I have been designated as a member of the Scientific Jury according to Article 18 of the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of BFU, concerning the procedure for evaluation of the above-mentioned PhD dissertation. As a member of the jury, I have received a copy of the dissertation work and its abstract. In the abstract, there is a "Reference to the contributions of the dissertation work". The PhD Student's "List of Publications" is also attached.

1. Volume and structure of the content of the dissertation.

The content of the dissertation is structured in three main chapters. In the first chapter of the work, basic theoretical concepts are presented. The analytical and systematic approach of the presentation should be noticed. The different theories of social attitudes are very well described. Theoretical analysis includes the communicative disorders in early childhood, as well as approaches and models for intervention in problems in language development. Parental attitudes in this aspect of developmental deficits are presented through their principal components. The second chapter is dedicated to the methodology of the conducted research. The main prerequisites are clearly formulated - the conceptual model, purposes, tasks and hypotheses. The method is presented, which is an author's development, and the successive stages for its construction are described exactly. PhD student Elena Kortezova operationalizes Ajzen's theory of "planned behaviour" through her method. The sample of the target population is large enough in size – a total of 234 valid completed questionnaires were analysed. Statistical methods of data processing

are relevant to the research model and the type of variables. The third chapter of the dissertation is devoted to the results of the conducted research. Through factor analysis of the data obtained from the method, the main independent variables that have an effect on parents' behaviours for the correction of communication disorders in children of early and preschool age were extracted - "attitude", "subjective norm", "perception of control" and "intention". Linear regression analyses generally confirmed the predictions of Ajzen's "planned behaviour" model. A comparative analysis was also performed on various demographic variables. The results of the research are summarized through 15 main conclusions, which precisely and clearly present the achievements of the dissertation work.

The dissertation is 254 pages long, together with the literature and appendices – of which the text occupies 231 pages. A total of 167 sources are listed as used and cited – 104 are in Cyrillic, 59 are in Latin and 4 are electronic sources. The dissertation is illustrated with 56 tables, 7 figures and appendices after the main text, occupying 23 pages.

2. Evaluation of the relevance and significance of the dissertation work.

Why the study of parental attitudes towards the language development of children with communication disorders is relevant? The PhD student cites a source according to which about 10% of children under the age of 7 years have a language disorder. The author of the dissertation also shares her own long-term experience in counselling and therapy of children with language and communication disorders, drawing conclusions that specialists in language development (speech therapists and psychologists) report in their practice an increased number of children in need of specialized language therapy and the speech. This trend suggests an increased interest in research in the dissertation scientific problem.

The significance of the research was also connected with the presumption that parents have a leading role in the language development of children and their attitude to the problems of this development has an impact on the functioning of the child throughout his life. The goals set by PhD student Elena Kortezova are focused on developing an instrumentarium for assessing parents' attitudes and other factors (according to Ajzen's model of "planned behavior"), which will serve specialists for more effective systematic work to overcome language and communication disorders in the development of children, focusing on the most sensitive period - early childhood and preschool age.

3. Scientific and scientific-applied results of the conducted research.

The dissertation work of Elena Kortezova has indisputable scientific and scientific-applied contributions. In a theoretical aspect, an analytical overview of the theories of social attitudes was made and parental attitudes were deductively defined in the context of communicative and language disorders in children of early age and preschool age. I fully accept the applied contributions indicated by the PhD student. Indeed, the research method developed by Elena Kortezova is very well structured and addresses all the important factors that play essential role on the prediction of parents' behaviour to participate in correctional and therapeutic activities. Despite being based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, PhD student Elena Kortezova has to be credited for expanding our understanding of parental attitudes in the research context: it turns out that there are two independent components – positive and negative. This means that parenting attitudes should be assessed on both components, not on only one dimension with two poles.

4. Plagiarism check.

PhD student Elena Kortezova has submitted a declaration in which she claims that the results of the dissertation research conducted are "original and not borrowed from research and publications in which I haven't take part." The text of the dissertation has been checked for plagiarism using the "strikeplagiarism" program. The check found no evidence of "borrowings" from other texts at large or quotations that are borrowed from other authors without indicating the sources. The design of the empirical study, its results and conclusions are the ideas and implementation of the author of the dissertation herself. The method used is elaborated by her own.

5. Publications of PhD student Elena Kortezova.

PhD student Kortezova has declare a total of 6 (six) publications related to the issues of the dissertation. Five of them are self-prepared articles that can be directly related to the topic of the dissertation. One study is also mentioned - in a collective monography, co-authored. I believe that the PhD student meets the minimum national requirements for acquiring the ONS "Doctor", according to Art. 2b of the Law of development of academic staff.

6. Critical remarks.

I don't find any significant shortcomings in the dissertation work.

7. Question.

How can the criterion validity of the method developed and proposed by the PhD student be checked?

Conclusion

Based on the brief review of the dissertation work, I believe that PhD student Elena Kortezova has the necessary theoretical and empirical competencies and can successfully conduct scientific research in the field of psychology. The results of her publication activity cover the minimum national requirements for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Therefore, I give a **positive assessment** to the presented dissertation on the topic "*Parental attitudes towards the language development of children with communicative disorders in preschool age (3-7 years)*". Bearing in mind what has been said so far, I propose to the respected Scientific Jury to award Elena Kortezova the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 3.2 Psychology (Pedagogical (Educational) and Development Psychology).

20.10.2022

reviewer:.....

(Assoc. Dr. Mihail Prodanov)