

REVIEW

By Prof. Irena Vassileva, PhD, NBU, scientific field 2.1. Philology

for the award of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in: Area of Higher Education: 1. Education Sciences, Professional Field: 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Subject Area: Methodology of English Language Teaching), candidate **Vanya Katsarska**.

Topic of the thesis: **„Designing a communicative competence-focused syllabus for an aeronautical English module for military pilots and air traffic controllers“**

1. Scientific and applied significance of the research question.

The researched question is important, because the topic under consideration has not been developed in the context of the English language training of Bulgarian military pilots and air traffic controllers and is hardly represented globally. At the same time, we are witnessing the process of integration of the Bulgarian Air Force into NATO structures, which requires the necessary level of command of aviation English by the Bulgarian cadets.

2. Accurately formulated aims and objectives of the dissertation.

The goals and objectives are clearly and precisely formulated both in terms of the content and scope of the analysis, its results, and their application.

3. Degree of knowledge of the state of the problem and relevance of the used literature.

The candidate is obviously well acquainted with the scientific literature on the problem, since in the process of analysis, as well as in the theoretical review, she relies on a very large number of authors. The approach to working with the sources is critical and demonstrates the author's ability to extract the essentials from the available publications in accordance with the specific needs of the research.

4. Correctness in referring to a representative number of authors.

The in-text citations and references are correct. The number of sources according to the Reference list is large enough and the publications are relevant to the topic, the aim, and objectives of study.

5. Presence of a substantiated and developed theoretical model of the research.

The study is theoretically based on three aspects related to the main objective of the study, namely the creation of an aviation English training course that meets the needs and requirements of the practice of pilots and air traffic controllers. The first aspect examined in detail are the theoretical viewpoints reflecting the character and peculiarities of the language, where a large number of publications are summarized from a critical perspective. Secondly, the notion of communicative competence is considered in the light of the needs of the target groups of learners and the possibilities of connecting the taught material with the successful implementation of their upcoming tasks. In addition, the issue of curriculum development in

general, of aeronautical English in particular, and examples of already existing programs at other universities are considered.

6. Correspondence of the chosen methodology and research methods to the set aims and objectives of the dissertation.

The choice of this combination of approaches provides a comprehensive scope of the parameters that influence the preparation of a specific training program in the Bulgarian context, which is the main purpose of the study. These are standard methods applied in a number of similar studies and have thus proven their reliability. Both the chosen methodology and the research methods correspond to the research objectives.

7. Presence of author's contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data.

The collection of empirical data and their analysis, as well as the experiments described in the study, are entirely carried out by the author.

Description of the contributions:

1. Brief description of the nature and assessment of the reliability of the material on which the contributions of the dissertation are based.

The materials which serve as the basis of the analysis in the study consist of the results obtained through the various methods applied (enumerated above). Besides, the results are presented in an easily comprehensible manner through a number of clearly structured graphs, which facilitates readers' understanding.

2. Description of the applicant's contributions and their classification.

One of the important contributions of the dissertation is the review of the development and current state of aviation English teaching, and for me personally, the analysis of the elements of communicative competence in relation to the real problems of the learners was very interesting.

The dissertation as a whole demonstrates that the candidate has a thorough theoretical knowledge of the latest developments in ELT, ESP and methods of teaching Aviation English.

The essential features of standard radiotelephone phraseology and the elements that distinguish it from natural language at all linguistic levels are described.

The main points of contribution in the dissertation consist in the conducted empirical research, which was carried out extremely precisely, theoretically grounded and consistent, and confirms the need to introduce a new curriculum in the teaching of aviation English at the Bulgarian Air Force Academy. Based on this, "Principles for the Design of an Aeronautical English Curriculum" are derived, and such a program has been piloted with positive results.

And last but not least, the analysis has been carried out with precision, with attention to detail, and approaches the issue from all possible perspectives.

3. Assessment of the degree of personal participation of the author in the contributions.

Although she relies on previous publications on the problem, the candidate uses them skillfully to support the new analyses and conclusions. Getting into even the smallest details of the data shows that the author has put in a lot of efforts and worked independently.

4. Assessment of the correspondence between the extended abstract and the main points and contributions of the dissertation.

The extended abstract reflects clearly and accurately the content of the dissertation and its contributions.

Impacts of the dissertation on the external environment.

1. Evaluation of the publications on the dissertation: number, nature of the journals in which they are published.

Five publications are listed, most of which concern individual aspects of the dissertation. Two of them are book chapters. Four publications are in English and three are in international editions. This demonstrates an interest in the topic developed by the candidate over the past four years. In addition, Vanya Katsarska has participated in six conferences. The candidate is a member of professional organizations and has delivered lectures and seminars at foreign universities on various programs.

2. Citations by other authors, reviews in the scientific press, etc.

The candidate has reported seven citations, six of which are by foreign authors.

Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows them).

I have no personal impressions.

Opinions, recommendations, and notes.

My only recommendation is that the author continues to successfully apply the results obtained from the dissertation in her teaching practice.

Conclusion with a clearly formulated positive or negative assessment of the dissertation.

My overall assessment of Vanya Katsarska's dissertation, extended abstract and publications is positive. The candidate is a promising scholar and practitioner in her field. The dissertation contains both theoretical and applied contributions to the practice of teaching Aviation English by applying a multi-faceted approach to the creation of courses and materials. The structure and content of the submitted dissertation and abstract fully meet the requirements of the LDASRB and the regulations for its implementation at NBU. This gives me a reason to propose that the

educational and scientific degree "PhD" be awarded to Vanya Katsarska in the Area of Higher Education: 1. Education Sciences, Professional Field: 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Subject Area: Methodology of English Language Teaching).

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Signature: Prof. Irena Vassileva, PhD