

# OPINION

from

**assoc. prof. Ekaterina Todorova, PhD**

Professional field 7.4. Public health

New Bulgarian University

on the scientific works for application for the academic position of "Associate Professor", in professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Speech Therapy), SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

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candidate chief. assist. prof. Elena Kirilova Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD

In accordance with the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the additional requirements of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for occupying the academic position of "associate professor", chief. assistant professor Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva **fulfills the minimum national requirements** for scientific and teaching activities in a professional direction: 1.2. Pedagogy (Speech Therapy). It should be noted that assist. prof. Boyadzhieva-Deleva has much more than the required number of points in the groups of indicators determined by the law.

Since 2004, Elena Boyadzhieva has a bachelor's degree in Special pedagogy-Speech therapy. In 2006, he completed his master's degree in Speech therapy, and since 2008 he has also obtained a master's degree in Special pedagogy, MP "Kinesitherapy of persons with neurosomatic diseases", SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2015, he successfully defended his dissertation on the topic "Language and cognitive development in children with dysarthria" and received the educational and scientific PhD degree in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, Special pedagogy - Speech therapy. In the period from 2004-2009, he worked as a speech therapist at 28 "Aleko Konstantinov" Secondary School, Sofia. Since 2013, he is the owner and manager of the "ELBO" Speech Therapy Center. In 2009, she was appointed as an assistant at the SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy, Department of "Special Pedagogy and Speech Therapy". From 2018 to the present, he holds the academic position of chief assistant at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts, Department of Speech Therapy, SU.

The teaching activity of Boyadzhieva-Deleva has been since 2009 as a full-time assistant, and since 2018 as a chief assistant in special pedagogy - speech therapy at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". He conducts systematic training of students in speech therapy (OCS Bachelor, OSC Master) in lecture courses and seminar exercises in a wide range of language and speech pathology: neuropsychology, diagnosis and therapy of acquired and developmental language disorders, communication disorders in craniofacial malformations, acquired

dysarthric and dysphagic disorders, speech fluency disorders, generalized developmental disorders, scientific research methodology. Organizes and leads groups on pre-graduate (internship) practice in speech therapy. Under her leadership and co-authorship, participation of students (OKS bachelor, OKS master, OKS doctor) in national and international scientific forums and projects has been realized.

**The teaching activity of assist. prof. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva is distinguished by exceptional activity in terms of course preparation and work with students. She is a very promising teacher who has enormous potential to prepare, maintain and develop teaching activities and to contribute to the introduction of new programs, courses, and teaching methods.**

As a candidate for the competition, assist. prof. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva presents a monograph on the topic: "Diagnosis of speech and its disorders in childhood", which contains the following scientific and scientific-applied information: (1) etiopathogenesis of speech disorders in childhood; (2) comparative and critical analysis of their clinical picture; (3) an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of typical speech development - anatomical-physiological, neurophysiological, neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic theoretical models. For the first time, in a monograph on speech therapy in Bulgarian, the methods for screening and diagnosis of speech disorders are systematized from the point of view point out the similarities and differences in the way of assessment, content and procedures, and the psychometric indicators they should cover. As a significant contribution and innovation, it should be noted that assist. prof. Boyadzhieva-Deleva's monograph, for the first time, presents a standardized author's battery in a complete form: Test for Oral Motor Abilities (TOMS). This is the first criterion-oriented author's diagnostic tool in the Bulgarian language, standardized according to world psychometric standards. The monograph can also be successfully used in the theoretical preparation of speech therapy students in various university courses aimed at speech therapy diagnosis in developmental speech disorders and research methodology.

**According to the scientific and practical requirements, the monograph presented by Elena Boyadzhieva, PhD fully meets the criteria for habilitation work and can be applied in the preparation and development of specialists in language and speech pathology.**

In addition to her publication activity, Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva PhD applied to the competition with more: two monographs; one study aid; one co-authored chapter of a collective monograph in English; two studies and 22 scientific articles. Seven of the publications are in refereed and indexed scientific publications in Scopus, Web of Science and EBSCO, published in the last four years.

The monograph "Oromotor speech therapy: Theoretical aspects and practical application" combines the theoretical and practical-applied aspects of problems useful for a wide range of specialists: speech therapists, orthodontists, occupational therapists, and rehabilitators. It is related to the teaching work of the author, being specifically aimed at oromotor therapy for craniofacial malformations, dysarthria and dysphagia. I believe that the monograph can find direct application in the practice of speech therapists working with speech

pathology in neurological disorders and orofacial anomalies, with eating disorders and dysphagia.

The scientific contributions of the articles and studies benefit the description, diagnosis and therapy of speech and language pathology, speech therapy consultation and the prevention of communication disorders in early childhood. It makes a very good impression that most of the publications contain an analysis of the results obtained from their own empirical research, including with large samples (more than 100 researched individuals).

According to the data from the prepared references for citations, Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD presents an impressive reference of 30 citations, as follows: 17 citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases or in monographs and collective volumes; 9 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes; 1 citation or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

**In general, the presented scientific publications and citations meet the requirements of the announced competition and represent a serious request for future scientific and research activity in the field of speech therapy, as well as for a future strong international presence with publications and citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information.**

The project activity of Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD includes participation in 7 national and international scientific and educational projects. Three of the scientific publications are related to two successfully implemented projects, specifically financed with funds from the state budget for scientific research, one of which Deleva is the head of: No. 80-10-25/21.03.2021 "Preparation of digital learning resources and creation of a didactic video fund at the Therapeutic Hall of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts to support the practical and electronic learning of students". These are facts that unconditionally demonstrate that **Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD possesses exceptional skills for teamwork and participation in the overall process of project preparation, implementation, and reporting, as well as in the preparation and presentation of project results - presentations, reports, and other publications.**

From the information presented on the competition and from personal impressions since 2009, I can confidently say that Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva PhD has been extremely active in administrative and public activities in the professional speech therapy community. She is a Member of the Board of Editors of Pedagogy/Education Journal (EDU); co-founder of the Association of Private Practitioners of Speech and Language Therapists; until 2021 – a member of the Board of Directors of the SSCPL, and from 2021 until now – a regular member of the SSCPL; Member of the support group for the "Trusted Speech Therapists" network of the "Association of Facial Anomalies - ALA"; Member of the International Association of Therapeutic Taping Specialists MASTERT; Head of the Therapeutic Hall of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". In the period between 2018-2022, she participated with sectional reports and poster presentations in a total of 19 international and national scientific forums. He works hard for the good public name and popularization of the

speech therapist profession by participating in various public initiatives – radio lectures, TV series, electronic platforms or podcasts, popular science appearances, etc.

**The administrative and public activity of assist. prof. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD shows an extremely active, and proactive teacher who has the skills to see in perspective, to develop and enrich the environment in which she works.**

**Conclusion: The candidate chief. assist. Prof. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD is a practical researcher with indisputable scientific achievements and contributions, a prominent university teacher with extensive experience (over 10 years), as well as proven administrative qualities. The overall publication, research, teaching, and public activity of Elena Kirilova Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD is a convincing motivation for her candidacy for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Speech Therapy) at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".**

**As a member of the Scientific Jury, I give my positive vote.**

11/10/ 2022

Signature:

Assoc. prof. Ekaterina Todorova, PhD