

STATEMENT

of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Katerina Atanasova Shtereva

for teaching and research activities

on Assis. Prof. Dr., Elena Kirilova Boyadzhieva-Deleva

candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at

Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski" by field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences

1.2. Pedagogy (Special pedagogy – Speech/Language therapy)

The competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in Special Pedagogy-Speech/Language Therapy for the needs of the Faculty of Educational Studies and Arts at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" was legally announced in the State Gazette, no. 48/28.06.2022. Only one candidate took part in the competition - Assis. Prof. Dr., Elena Kirilova Boyadzhieva-Deleva, currently a teacher at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", Faculty of Educational Studies and Arts, Department of Speech/Language Therapy.

According to the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" the candidate Assis. Prof. Dr., Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva fully meets the conditions for admissibility, having submitted the complete set of necessary documents for the procedure.

1. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva graduated with a master's degree in speech therapy in 2006 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and defended her doctoral dissertation in 2015. An extremely good impression is made by the fact that she is strongly committed to speech/language therapy theory and practice, which is proven by the numerous courses, trainings and projects in which she participates, as well as by her close relationship with practicing speech therapists and families of children and adults with communication disorders by holding a number of seminars, webinars and trainings.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

2.1. The teaching activity of the candidate is related to Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", where Assis. Prof. Dr., Elena Kirilova Boyadzhieva-Deleva is a full-time teacher with 13 years of experience, of which 9 years as an Assistant Professor and 4 years as a Chief Assistant Professor in the specialty of Speech and Language Therapy at the Department of Special Pedagogy

and Speech/Language Therapy, and currently - the separate Department of Speech/Language Therapy.

The disciplines she teaches are closely related to her research interests, publications and contributions. The innovative courses "Planning and structuring of speech therapy", "Application of therapeutic massage in speech therapy" etc., in connection with which the candidate has a number of scientific publications, make a strong impression. The joint work of the candidate with students and doctoral students in scientific projects in student scientific forums and scientific projects in the Fund for scientific research is also impressive, as well as the number of volunteer initiatives to provide speech therapy assistance.

2.2. The scientific production of Ch. Assis. Prof. Dr. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva is impressive. In connection with the current competition, from the period 2018 – 2022, 34 publications are available, including 3 monographs; 1 co-authored chapter from a collective monograph; 2 studies and 24 articles.

From the overall output, several main directions of the candidate's scientific research interests can be differentiated, with the area that stands out strongly: *"Description, diagnosis and therapy of speech disorders"*. In this direction, Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva skilfully supports scientific information with empirical material from her own research, which gives high value to her publications. Here it should be noted the monographic work "Diagnosis of speech and its disorders in childhood", in which, in addition to the rich theoretical base on the problem, methods for screening and diagnosis of speech disorders are systematized with a standardized author's battery Test of Oral Motor Abilities (TOMA) . In addition, in a number of articles, the author presents the connections of typical and impaired speech development with disorders of nutritional mechanisms; makes a thorough review of the models of verbal communication with an emphasis on differentiation of essentially different pathologies (speech and phonological, linguistic). This most long-term and detailed analyzed and researched area, the fruit of a long-term, in-depth and consistent scientific activity of the candidate, also includes the other two monographs, preceding in time: "Oromotor speech therapy: Theoretical aspects and practical application" and "Speech, language and cognitive development in children with cerebral palsy". In this direction, other publications in Bulgarian and English by Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva can be noted, which are proof of the research studies on the subject in the way of building a complete theoretical-practical concept.

Personally, I highlight the works of Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva in the field of *"Language disorders of development"*, where the results and developments are reflected both from own research and from the candidate's participation in a pan-European research conducted as part of the

work under COST Action IS1406, European Research Network. The fact of placing the specifics of the services for children with language disorders in Bulgaria in the context of other 34 countries is extremely important and of great contribution. In this field, developments related to bilingualism and multilingualism, whose topics have relatively recently entered the speech therapy scientific circles in Bulgaria, are also relevant.

Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva's interests and focus on speech therapy practice give reason to single out another area in her research, namely: *Theoretical substantiation of speech therapy practice*. It reflects the ripe need to direct attention in teaching and define directories such as: speech therapy planning; speech therapy practices for early intervention and prevention; speech therapy counseling.

A strong impression is also made by the presence of the **indexed scientific publications** (4 in number) in the foreign press, as well as those reflected in Bulgarian and foreign library catalogs - 29 articles. There are **38 bibliographic citations** of the works of Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva in our and foreign scientific publications, of which 7 in Web of Science; 2 in Scopus and 1 in ScienceDirect.

2.3. The scientific research and practical-applied activity of ch. Assistant Professor Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva also includes membership in authoritative professional organizations in the relevant scientific field, membership in support groups and national associations. I highly appreciate her leadership role in the Therapeutic Hall of the Faculty of Educational Studies and Arts as well as her participation in a number of international and national projects and trainings. Widely used and highly valued by practicing speech therapists and students is her compendium "Forms to help speech therapy practice".

3. Personal impressions

It is my pleasure to express my wonderful personal impressions of Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva as an active and responsible colleague, scientist, teacher and inspirer of the new addition of speech therapists. In her scientific and personal appearances and relationships, she has always demonstrated high professional ethics, collegiality and consistency to raise the prestige of speech therapy on a national and international scale.

Conclusion

The analysis and assessment of the research and teaching activities of ch. assistant professor Dr. Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva give me reason to state that she is a researcher and teacher with proven competences in her scientific field. Her achievements and publications fully correspond to modern trends in science and practice and are of high contribution to a wide range of specialists and

students. The presented documents and materials fully comply with the requirements of the Law on Academic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the internal regulations for the development of the academic staff and educational activities of SU "St. Kl. Ohridski".

This gives me reason to support with full confidence the candidacy of Ch. assistant professor Elena Boyadzhieva-Deleva, PhD, for the academic position "associate professor".

08. 11.2022

Signature:

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Katerina Shtereva/