

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. PETINA VALENTINOVA VICHEVA, “N. J. Vaptsarov ” Naval Academy Associate Professor in: 2.1 Philology, scientific specialty "General and Comparative Linguistics" (Applied Linguistics) for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" professional field: 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... Scientific specialty: Methodology of teaching in modern languages (English language)

With candidate Vanya Katsarska

dissertation topic

DESIGNING A COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE-FOCUSED SYLLABUS FOR AN AERONAUTICAL ENGLISH MODULE FOR MILITARY PILOTS AND AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

The dissertation submitted for review has a total volume of 238 pages and contains 4 chapters - introduction, theoretical foundations of the study, empirical study and results , conclusion, list of scientific and scientific-applied contributions. A reference list of 160 titles, as well as appendices of the ICAO descriptors for English language proficiency, 4 surveys, a sample list of free-response survey questions, and 4 syllabi.

1. Significance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied relation.

The topic of the dissertation can be defined as constantly relevant, due to the fact that the object of research is the aviation English language, the use of which is related both to the achievement of success in professional communication and to the safety of flights in the air space. In the current conditions, it turns out to be imperatively relevant, given the growing requirements for the competencies of military pilots and air traffic controllers with the upcoming introduction of new technology and equipment. The thematic orientation directly corresponds to the Reference Framework of the Council of Europe for competences, which once again shows the right direction of the doctoral student's scientific research in terms of the relevance and relevance of the dissertation work. In this regard, presenting her scientific research, the author emphasizes the processes of globalization in aviation, skillfully bringing out the most important interrelationship, namely the fact that effective communication in aviation is an important element of flight security and safety. This dissertation offers an up-to-date solution for developing an aviation English syllabus in a modern educational context, based on interdisciplinarity, convertibility and dynamism. The research tools used in the dissertation are multi-component and based on modern concepts. It is necessary to emphasize that the developed communication models are particularly relevant, because ensuring safety does not bring added linguistic value, but is at their core.

2. Accurately formulated goals and objectives of the dissertation

The purpose of the research is explicitly stated, sub-goals, research tasks and questions are reasonably presented. The object, the subject and the main thesis of the research are defined correctly. The main objective of the research is to create a draft aviation English syllabus for pilot and air traffic controller cadets by examining their communicative competences necessary for safe and effective communication in aviation English. In relation to the main goal and sub-goals, the six research tasks are precisely and clearly formulated: to review and critically analyze literary sources on the subject and normative documents related to principles, concepts, components and status of aviation English; to analyze the opinion of representatives of the various stakeholders regarding the language needs of military pilots and air traffic controllers; to formulate learning goals, tasks and expected learning outcomes under the new syllabus; to specify the specific content (topics and verbal actions) of the syllabus; to propose appropriate types of tasks recommended to be implemented in teaching; to pilot the syllabus in a real academic setting to assess its quality and effectiveness. We should note that as a result of the in-depth research work of the author, the set goal and tasks have been fulfilled.

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

The author thoroughly researches the scientific problem and skilfully uses the scientific apparatus in the researched area. The logic of the presentation, the emphasis on the opinions and theories related to the tasks of the dissertation is an indicator of the scientific potential of the doctoral student and of the high level of theoretical thinking. The experimental study is described precisely, the interpretation of the results is thorough and competent, and they highlight the author's ability to extract, interpret and summarize information. Emphasis should be placed on the well-prepared and high-level empirical research, such as the selection and construction of the set of research tools, as well as the correct statistical processing of the data. Conclusions are well drawn and convincing and they are subject to verification in different formats and contexts.

4. Correctness in quoting a representative number of authors.

The dissertation meets the requirements for citation of the sources.

5. A substantiated and well developed theoretical model of the research.

In order to provide a solid foundation for the dissertation's empirical research and a sound rationale for the research questions, an extensive literature review was conducted. Chapter Two is divided into three main sections. The first considers English as a lingua franca in aviation. Displaying skills of in-depth analysis, the author differentiates between aviation English and aeronautical English and proves that aviation English is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), but with its own distinctive characteristics. Aviation English is analyzed, which includes standard radiotelephone phraseology and operational English (plain English). A literature review was conducted that included the important aviation documents that mandate language proficiency standards for pilots and air traffic controllers in both civil

and military aviation. The second section of this chapter examines communicative competence - concept, components and models. The role of national, professional and organizational culture in the context of aviation is also considered; the importance of interactive competence in aeronautical English is highlighted and opportunities for integrating language and content into the teaching process are explored. The third section provides a brief overview and analysis of syllabus theory – definition, types, and different approaches to syllabus development. Three aviation English syllabi from foreign universities are briefly discussed, and the conclusions prove once again the need to develop a specific one, the main goal of which is to increase the competence of the target group. The literature review related to the research problem is thorough and determines its theoretical model. The experimental tools meet the tasks set. A model of an aeronautical English language syllabus aimed at increasing the communicative competences of military pilots and air traffic controllers has been constructed and theoretically substantiated. The literature review is comprehensive and tied to the experimental tools of the study.

6. Relevance of the chosen methodology and research methodology with the set goal and tasks of the dissertation.

The research is mainly based on methods such as: analysis and synthesis, abstraction and generalization. To achieve the set research goals and tasks, the author uses a large set of research approaches and methods. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are skilfully combined. It must be emphasized that, in addition to the research and analysis of the scientific literature on the subject, an analysis of good practices from a global scale was made through the prism of syllabi in related institutions. The use of different approaches and the presentation of the analysis of the empirical data by means of static data, models, show the depth of the research and emphasize the dissertation's own contribution. The survey used was conducted among learners and lecturers in order to examine the validity and adequacy of the new syllabus and to obtain reliable feedback from the respondents. The author presents arguments in favor of her choice and draws adequate conclusions in accordance with the needs of the learners.

7. Contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data.

I believe that the collection and analysis of empirical data was done personally by the author. The use of different approaches and the presentation of the analysis of the empirical data by means of static data, graphs, tables and models show the depth of the research and emphasize the doctoral student's own contribution.

8. Description of contributions:

8.1. Brief description of the nature and assessment of the authenticity of the material on which the contributions of the dissertation are based.

I believe that the contributions declared by the doctoral student in the dissertation work are the result of independent work. This is evident in the author's publications, which reflect the problems in the field of the subject of the dissertation work. It is obvious that the

availability of professional experience is the basis of one's contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data. The dissertation has rich information from the point of view of the research done.

8.2. Description of the candidate's contributions and their classification.

Scientific contributions:

The theory in the field of teaching English for specific purposes has been enriched by determining the place and importance of aeronautical English in the training of military pilots and air traffic controllers.

Scientific and applied contributions:

A strong interrelationship between four key competencies - linguistic, interactive, professional and intercultural - has been identified in aeronautical language training for military pilots and air traffic controllers. The process for developing an Aviation English syllabus for military pilots and air traffic controllers from its initial conception to its implementation in practice has been studied.

Practical and applied contributions:

A process of improving aeronautical language training for military pilots and air traffic controllers by introducing a syllabus that combines the communicative approach, the competence-oriented approach and the cultural characteristics of communication is proposed. The importance of the combination of standard radiotelephone communication and operational English (plain English) in the training of military pilots and air traffic controllers is presented. Topics are offered that meet the needs of novice military pilots and air traffic controllers, their level of professional expertise, and are motivating. The development of reading skills is included in the syllabus for military pilots and air traffic controllers. Interactive aeronautical language training task types for military pilots and air traffic controllers based on authentic professional tasks are provided.

8.3. Assessment of the degree of personal participation of the doctoral student in the contributions.

The dissertation shows the ability of the doctoral student to analyze on the basis of theoretical knowledge. In the course of the research, quantitative methods were used - 4 surveys. By means of these quantitative methods, the compliance of the developed program with the needs of the learners is taken into account. Qualitative methods are also used in the research - already developed syllabi in related international institutions are studied. A statistical presentation of the data is made. A variety of tools are used in order to verify the formulated hypotheses from different points of view, which proves a good research culture. The obtained empirical results are interpreted in detail and relevant conclusions are drawn.

9. Assessment of the abstract's compliance with the main provisions and contributions of the dissertation.

The submitted 60-page abstract is well structured and meets the volume requirements. It reflects not only the main results obtained from the dissertation research, but also gives insight into details of it.

10. Impacts of the dissertation work on the external environment.

The doctoral student has five publications which are thematically related to the researched topic in the dissertation - 3 articles and 2 chapters in international journals.

11. Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows her).

I know Vanya Katsarska as an excellent professional and a good colleague. The presented dissertation proves my impressions and shows sustainability of her professional realization, as well as development towards deepening scientific research.

12. Opinion, recommendations and notes.

I believe that the dissertation has a finished form and meets all requirements. Weaknesses could not be easily found. Doctoral student Vanya Katsarska should continue her future research and scientific-applied activity in the field of aviation language for special purposes.

Conclusion

The dissertation deserves a positive assessment both due to the depth of the theoretical formulations and due to the in-depth analysis and research of the empirical material. I believe that the dissertation meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act and the Regulations for its implementation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

I give a **positive assessment** of the dissertation on DESIGNING A COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE-FOCUSED SYLLABUS FOR AN AERONAUTICAL ENGLISH MODULE FOR MILITARY PILOTS AND AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS, presented by Vanya Katsarska and recommend that she be awarded an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... Scientific specialty: Methodology of teaching in modern languages (English language).

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Reviewer:

/Assoc. Prof. Petina Vicheva PhD/