

## Opinion

by Prof. Stefan Mateeff Mateeff, Dr. Sci., Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology, New Bulgarian University, regarding the scientific papers for participation in a competition for the academic position of "professor", in professional direction 3.2. Psychology, announced in SG No. 87/17.10.2023, with candidate associate professor Dr. Elena Andonova

### I.

The certificate presented by Dr. Elena Andonova shows that she meets the minimum national requirements according the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (indicator groups A to E) for holding the position of professor. In groups G to I are the additional requirements of the NBU, which Andonova also covers. In conclusion, the scientometric data show that Associate Professor Elena Andonova meets and exceeds the national requirements and the requirements of the NBU for holding the academic position of "professor" in the professional field 3.2 Psychology.

### II.

1. The monographic work presented by Andonova with the title: Andonova, E. (2022). Early language development. Grammar. Sofia: NBU Publishing House, occupies a central place in the competition materials. The monograph presents the results of long-term work on the development and application of a new for our country tool for researching the early language development of children learning the Bulgarian language. This is VERBA - Questionnaires for language development - Bulgarian adaptation. The methodology and content of the tool (for children aged 16-30 months) are presented. The Early Language Development Questionnaire is translated from English; it has been adapted for the Bulgarian population and has been tested with a large number of subjects. Existing theories and approaches to the study of mother tongue grammar acquisition are critically reviewed. In her research, Andonova was able to pursue the development of language acquisition, as well as the development of skills for combining words in expressions of varying complexity. She has also examined in detail the role of various social and demographic factors in the process of early language development. It is my opinion that this is a valuable and important scholarly work with an indisputable contribution to developmental psycholinguistics.

2 - 4. The aforementioned monograph is not Andonova's only book; in 2022 she wrote and published another book dedicated to vocabulary in early language development in children. This book is not presented in the self-assessment, so I do not consider it in this opinion.

In her self-evaluation, Andonova presents 27 publications issued after the election as associate professor. In them we find essential and important contributions in psycholinguistics and the psychology of cognition.

Interesting results from the field of spatial cognition and communication, obtained in the conditions of real situations and dialogue, are presented. The influence of the dialogue partner's utterances in the description of locations, orientation of objects and in the description of routes are shown. Internal priming effects are found, with these effects being more significant for lower frequency spatial patterns. An effect of compatibility of geographical directions with the location of objects on maps is also established. I find this issue extremely interesting and important, not only from a fundamental, but also from an applied point of view.

An original contribution to the psychology of linguistic information processing by adults is contained in a series of studies that establish an interaction of the grammatical gender of the word in Bulgarian and the gender of the participants in experiments with tasks for repeating and classifying nouns, adjectives and verbs, as well as in tasks for comparing visual stimuli with their verbal descriptions.

Tools have been developed for studying the academic motivation of students, some of which are already used in the practice of Bulgarian schools for the study of psychological assessment of development at an early age. The different methods and weak points in the assessment in our country are outlined. A study of the needs of the Bulgarian families of children with autism spectrum disorder is presented, aimed at supporting the families and the integration of these children. The main approaches to assessing the development of children who grow up in a family environment with different cultural and linguistic practices and attitudes are examined.

In her self-assessment, Andonova presents 36 more important citations of her publications. According to Scopus and Web of Science, the citations are many times more.

### III.

Andonova reads lectures in both the Bachelor's and Master's programs of the Department. She also contributed to the formation of the bachelor's program in English. She supervised two successfully defended doctoral theses. In addition to her teaching duties, she has been a participant and supervisor in 5 international and 4 national research projects.

Andonova also has substantial international experience. She has given invited lectures at renowned European universities. Her organizational and administrative activities are impressive. From 2013 to now, she is head and organizer of the international Summer School of Cognitive Science. In addition, she is the organizer of 3 conferences "Early child development, science and practice". In 2016 -2022 she was board member of the Cognitive Science Society.

### IV-V.

Since 2013, she has been the head of the Research Center for Cognitive Science, NBU. She was head (2016 – 2020) of the Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology in NBU. She was a member of the Academic Council of the NBU and of other committees of the NBU. I have known Andonova for decades. She is a highly qualified and responsive colleague.

In conclusion, the candidacy of Associate Professor Dr. Elena Andonova meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff, the Rules for its Application and the requirements of NBU. Andonova is an experienced scientist, researcher and teacher, with high international experience and creative potential. She is an extremely suitable candidate for the position announced in this competition. I highly recommend the members of the Scientific Jury and the honorable Academic Council of the New Bulgarian University to elect her to the academic position of "Professor".

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