

REVIEW

**by Prof. Penka Todorova Kaneva, PhD,
“St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo
of the materials submitted for participation
in a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”
at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in...
(Methodology of English Language Education)**

Grounds for submitting the review: By order № RD 38-41/22.01.2024 r. of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in... (Methodology of English Language Education), announced in the State Gazette, issue 96 of 17.11.2023. Chief Assistant PhD Tzvetanka Tzolova Dilkova is the only candidate in the competition.

I. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE SUBMITTED MATERIALS

1. Information about the candidate

The set of documents submitted by Chief Assistant PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova for the competition comply with the minimum national requirements (under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law for DASRB) and the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for holding the academic position of “assistant professor” in the scientific and professional field of the competition.

2. Information about the candidate

Tzvetanka Dilkova graduated as a Master of Arts in English philology from the Faculty of Philology at “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo in 1996, and in 2017 she received a doctoral degree in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in... from the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy where she had been working. The title of her PhD thesis is: “Learning Translation Strategies in Teaching English in Chemical Technology and Metallurgy Academic Programmes – Methodological Projections”.

Her work experience is related to teaching English as a foreign language in various educational institutions: Secondary Comprehensive School "Hristo Botev" in Vratza, Second English Language High School "Thomas Jefferson" in Sofia, Section of Foreign Languages at the Department of Humanities and Ensuring Quality in Education at the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy, Department of Basic Training at MT&M College. In 2019 she held the positions of assistant in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in... at Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski and since 2020 she is a chief assistant at the same Department.

As a lecturer at Sofia University Tzvetanka Dilkova has developed the curriculum and has given lectures in six academic courses – all of them - directly connected to the specific of the announced competition.

Dilkova is also a team member of an Erasmus + project.

3. General review of the scientific work and achievements of the candidate

Chief Assistant PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova participates in the competition for an associate professor with 16 publications, which, by genre and indicators of the minimum national requirements, can be divided into: one monograph (indicator V), one book based on her doctoral thesis (indicator G-5), fourteen articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or publication in edited collective volumes (indicator G-7). The scientific production submitted for review does not include or repeat publications submitted in previous procedures for acquiring a scientific title and academic position; its quantitative dimensions fulfill the requirements for participation in the competition, regulated in the minimum national requirements (under Art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the Law for DASRB) and in the additional requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the academic position of "associate professor" in the scientific and professional field of the competition.

The publications can be divided into the following topical areas:

- Linguocultural aspects of teaching English as a foreign language (6 publications);
- Linguodidactic issues of teaching English for specific purposes (7 publications);
- Teaching and learning English as a foreign language in an academic environment (3 publications).

The subject areas of research and publications of the candidate correspond to the subject area of the announced competition.

4. Analysis of the content of the submitted publications and the scientific and practical achievements of the candidate in this competition

The monograph "Linguocultural Aspect in Modern English Textbooks" (UI „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“, 2023, 160 s.) is dedicated to an interdisciplinary problem – relationship between language, culture and ethnic origin. Moreover, the monograph is aimed at the theory and practice of contemporary English teaching as a foreign language since it presents a scientific research of textbook content about its opportunities to develop linguocultural self-reflection students' skills. Conclusions, related to the linguistic and cultural potential of English language textbooks, were made, based on the analysis of three textbooks, used in Bulgarian intensive English high schools – Gateway (A1, A2 levels of OEEP), Focus for Bulgaria (A1, A2 levels of OEEP) and Legacy (A1, A2 levels of OEEP).

In the first chapter of the monograph the main idea is that the key for understanding the structure of any modern language is knowing the linguo-historical processes. That is why Dilkova's starting point is to trace the historical development of English language. She looks in depth at the reasons why English is an important global language, international language and language - *lingua franca*; she finds them not only in a historical aspect but also in a political, economic and linguistic aspect. Tzvetanka Dilkova synthesizes a lot of scientific ideas, defines the three functions of English language and relates them to the goals of contemporary foreign language teaching with correct references to the author's views. Outlining different didactic goals and parameters depending on the specific educational context and the various students' orientations towards particular language use (use of English as a global language, use of English as an international language and use of English as *lingua franca*) is a contribution to the theory and practice of teaching English.

The author claims that there is a contradiction between the communication, oriented towards the model of speakers of English as a first language which is typical for Bulgarian schools, and the "expanding model of English as *lingua franca*". With the conclusion that "the focus of teaching English needs to be changed in order to be adequate to the widespread use of English" she refers to the problems of her own research.

In the second chapter of the monograph Tzvetanka Dilkova examines some current problems of English language teaching in a sociolinguistic perspective – various models of studying English for specific purposes and ways of intensive learning in Bulgarian high schools. The author draws conclusions about the most important ideas and practices in teaching English in the age of globalization and technological society, and about the untapped opportunities of teaching English for specific purposes and Content and Language Integrated Learning.

The role of linguocultorology in contemporary foreign language teaching and the linguocultural aspects in three English textbooks, which are used in Bulgarian education system, are discussed in the *third chapter* of the monograph. The scientific contribution in this part of the text is related to the presented theoretical framework for English textbooks analysis.

Tzvetanka Dilkova chooses four criteria, which she calls "aspects" to analyze the textbooks: 1) linguocultural aspect: the place of linguocultural section in the textbooks and a comparison of its volume with the rest of the textbook content; 2) thematic content in the linguocultural sections; 3) thematic content in the CLIL section and in the cultural section; 4) compliance with the curriculum.

I believe the perception of the author's ideas would be easier if criteria, indicators and research data were presented not only with a text but with some graphics or diagrams. It would be better if the conclusions and summaries made were more clearly outlined as final components of each part of the monograph. This would increase the practical and applied contributions of the theoretical framework for English textbooks analyses. Moreover, the monograph could be used by educators as a model of linguocultural analysis of the various English textbooks content.

I consider *the scientific contributions of the monograph* in the following directions:

- Some education deficits are identified; the need of a process of change is stated (the process of teaching cultural and linguocultural competence in English and intensive learning of English as a foreign language in Bulgarian high schools). The statement that cultural competence should be the main, not an additional means of learning the target language in the modern global world is convincingly defended. Moreover. It is also argued that students' linguistic knowledge and skills should not be developed at the expense of their cultural, intercultural and linguocultural knowledge and skills.
- Specific recommendations to the authors of textbooks are made: to expand linguocultural elements in the textbooks content through presenting students' native culture, the culture of native speakers and international culture (different from the culture of the target language native speakers). These recommendations could be useful for teachers when choosing additional resources to upgrade the textbooks content.
- Some sample exercises are constructed which stimulate developing of linguocultural skills and could be easily adapted to match the content of different textbooks.

Five more of the publications submitted for review discuss the same topic - linguoculture in teaching English as a foreign language. The linguocultural approach is considered as a result of the nowadays expectations and requirements for the foreign language teaching. The author pays special

attention to the development of students' Intercultural self-reflection and claims that it is important the cultural aspects in foreign language communicative activities to come to the fore in order cultural, linguocultural and intercultural competence to be acquired.

Linguodidactic issues of teaching English as a foreign language for specific purposes are the subject of seven publications. Tzvetanka Dilkova examines the process of acquisition of grammatical and communicative knowledge in English which is based on the conceptual knowledge of the first language. The possibilities for rehabilitation of dictation exercises in modern language teaching are discussed in order dictation exercises to be used as a means for developing linguistic and communicative knowledge. The popularities of teaching English for specific purposes and needs are outlined.

The second monograph presented by Tzvetanka Dilkova, as well as two of her articles, discuss problems of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in an academic environment. The monograph is written on the basis of a defended PhD thesis for acquiring an educational and scientific degree "doctor"; that is why it is not supposed to be reviewed. The articles argue for the need teaching to be differentiated depending on various levels of foreign language proficiency and various cognitive styles. The basic principles of differentiated teaching and their application in an academically diverse foreign language environment are examined.

In conclusion, as a content analysis summary of the submitted publications and the scientific and practical achievements of the candidate, I would say that Tzvetanka Dilkova shows a good knowledge of theoretical resources in the scientific field in which she develops, moreover, she relies on her rich practical experience as an English language teacher and lecturer. Chief assistant PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova is a scientist who is known not only for her teaching career in three academic institutions, but also for her participations in scientific forums (6 participations in scientific conferences), and for her scientific research work – publications and project work. This statement is proved by the citations of her scientific works – there are 12 noticed citations.

5. Critical remarks, recommendations and questions

I have no critical remarks on the work of Chief Assistant PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova. My recommendation is her next articles to be published in referenced and indexed in worldfamous databases with scientific information magazines.

6. Conclusions on the application of the candidate

After I reviewed all the materials and scientific publications, submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition, and analyzed their significance and scientific contributions to the theory and practice of early language learning, I confirm that the achievements of Chief Assistant

PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova meet the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b and the Regulations of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in.... (Methodology of English Language Education) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". **I give my positive assessment of the candidacy.**

II. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Based on the above, **I recommend to the scientific jury to make a proposal** to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" **for the election of Chief Assistant PhD Tzvetanka Dilkova to the academic position of "Associate Professor"** in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in.... (Methodology of English Language Education).

17.03.2024 г.

Signature: 

(Prof. Penka Kaneva, PhD)