

EVALUATION

of a doctoral thesis titled

THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SKILLS TO INTERPRET LITERARY TEXTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS WITH EXTENSIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

submitted by Maria Metodieva Genova

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Maria Genova's dissertation has been approved for public defense by a comprehensive assembly of the section of Humanitarian Education at St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University's Department of Information and In-Service Training of Teachers. It has 291 pages, 272 of which are the body of text and list of references. Clearly formulated in the dissertation are the subject matter, the object of research, aims, tasks and methods. The impact of digital technologies on foreign language learning and cultural studies is a moot topic in current theories of language teaching all over the world. Against this backdrop, I find the field chosen for research in the dissertation quite felicitous.

A leading objective in M. Genova's thesis is the construction of a practically applicable innovative apparatus based on digital tools and resources for the interpretation of literary texts in the teaching of English. The list of references suggests an in-depth knowledge of relevant academic sources, which is a good foundation for the research endeavor and for setting up the theoretical framework of the study. M. Genova has demonstrated a thorough academic knowledge of the subject matter tackled in her dissertation. This is substantiated by a thorough knowledge of fundamental regulations and empirical information gained from observation in school. The implementation of the author's innovative educational technology goes through a preparatory phase, then a deduction phase, on to a formation phase and then a concluding phase and this involves 151 respondents.

Chapter One presents a theoretical outline of the opportunities and the general strategies for enhancing learners' literacy, the place and role of literary texts and digital technologies in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL).

Chapter Two is a rationalization of the need of integrating digital technologies in teaching English through literature and offers a perspective on the techniques of work in a digital environment.

Chapter Three is a logical follow-up of the preceding one. Here the author describes and analyses the conducted pedagogical experiment, the application of the research apparatus, the organization and phases of research and the statistically processed results. M. Genova's analysis is substantiated by abundant empirical data and the results obtained have been thoroughly interpreted and aptly presented in tables and figures.

The Abstract of PhD Thesis has 48 pages and truly renders the basic theoretical and methodological tenets assumed in the thesis. As relevant to the dissertation topic the author has adduced reference to six publications of hers where various aspects of her theoretical and applied research have been tackled. The academic contribution claims listed by M. Genova realistically correlate with the research outcomes in her thesis.

In my opinion, Maria Genova's dissertation is an innovative contribution in the field of the theory and practice of foreign language teaching. It satisfies the requirements stipulated in the *Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and in the *Code of Requirements and Procedures for Awarding Academic Degrees and Appointment to Academic Positions at St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University*. In that regard, with complete conviction I suggest that the academic defense board award Maria Metodieva Genova the doctoral degree in the academic field 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Methodology of English Language Teaching).

10 September 2020
Veliko Tarnovo

Signed:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr Vesela Belcheva)