

## **OPINION**

**by Prof. Angel Marinov Petrov, PhD,**

**Lecturer at the Department of Methodology at the Faculty of Slavic Studies, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, related to the competition for the academic position "Professor" at Sofia University, announced in SG No. 88 /18.10.2024, in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... (Methodology of foreign language teaching in a digital environment, in English and Turkish), for the needs of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology**

By order No. RD-38-664 of October 18, 2024 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of 'professor' at Sofia University in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... (Methodology of teaching a foreign language in a digital environment - English and Turkish), announced for the needs of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology of Sofia University.

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the competition: Prof. Danail Kirilov Danov, DSc, currently lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts of Sofia University.

The set of materials presented by Prof. Danail Danov is in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of Sofia University. Prof. Danail Danov has attached a total of 13 scientific works for his participation in the competition, of which 3 monographs (one of them is an independent work of authorship, and in the other two collective monographs the candidate for professor is the author of separate chapters) and 10 articles (three of which are co-authored), published in indexed and refereed scientific publications. Five of the articles are in Bulgarian language, the rest are in English. Procedural violations in the preparation of documents in connection with participation in the competition have not been found.

The leading work presented among the attached documents is the monograph "Fundamentals of Media Pedagogy: A Guide to the World of Digital Culture and Its Tools" (2023).

The study thoroughly, purposefully and with professional skill analyzed the following important aspects of the studied phenomenon: the essence and functions of media pedagogy as a science; media pedagogy as a key competence of adolescents in the 21st century; practices for applying digital media tools in the educational process; modern forms of pedagogical support; prospects for strengthening ties between different generations, etc. The central idea of the monograph is the author's understanding that the media literacy of the learners, on the one hand, helps to reduce the risks associated with digital communication, in which adolescents participate daily and everywhere, and on the other hand, helps to develop their creative abilities through opportunities for positive experiences and for a constantly enriching personal, academic and social experience (p. 9).

An important contribution of the candidate for professor to the theory and practice of language sciences and educational sciences can be defined as the conceptualization of the subject area of media pedagogy with its main tasks: to identify media tools; to determine the specificity of consumer habits; to characterize the leading signs of consumer behavior; to master skills for assessing the reliability of media information; to formulate rules for using various media tools; to analyze the possibilities of various media digital "tools" for training, upbringing and lifelong learning (p. 17). Convincingly, with the help of serious argumentation from theoretical statements and ideas born in pedagogical practice, the main thesis of the author is substantiated in the analyzed work - media pedagogy with its educational projections in specific learning situations ensures the development and improvement of media literacy in students, a competence that modern young people need to be active users of digital media content, knowing its forms, effects and messages and possessing critical thinking skills that do not allow unscrupulous suggestions and manipulations.

The problems of the monograph under consideration, which are the core of the overall scientific research activity of Prof. Danail Danov, are also seriously reflected in his work on various national and international research projects. They are also a kind of center in a series of lecture courses that the author has been successfully leading for years among students from the Faculty of the Educational Studies and the Arts, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of the Sofia University within the disciplines: "Media Pedagogy", "Inclusive Education", "Media and Information Literacy", etc. The creative and teaching professional path of the candidate for professor gives grounds to claim that he possesses capacity, theoretical breadth of scientific

thinking and practical skills for popularizing his own ideas, i.e. qualities that provide opportunities for conceptualizing creative methodological systems in FLT with theoretical, practical and prognostic value.

The conclusion that can be made is that the analyzed monograph is a modernly written book, which successfully combines the "depth" of the scientific presentation with the author's pragmatic view of the problems of pedagogical practice in view of their usefulness both for adolescents and for a wide range of readers who are interested in the problems of media pedagogy as a scientific discipline and education in a digital environment as a modern educational perspective. Due to limitations in the volume of the discourse type "opinion", I will focus only on a few of the publications of the candidate for professor. The first of them is entitled "The role of the teacher in increasing the effectiveness of the multicultural classroom and improving intercultural communication" (2023). The conceptual apparatus of the text extends to the analysis and interpretation of important problems related to the modern educational reality, and encompasses reflection on current pedagogical problems such as the following: how to contribute to achieving integration between people through adequate methodological procedures; what pedagogical means to use to educate in a sense of tolerance towards differences in specific educational communicative contexts; how to instill through educational activities a sense of solidarity, cooperation, cohesion and coherence between representatives of different ethnic and culturally conditioned groups of persons in the conditions of education and upbringing; why and how a positive attitude towards the human rights of each participant in the pedagogical discourse should be expressed, their identity, dignity and desire for self-determination should be respected, etc. The conclusion that the author of the article makes is relevant for pedagogy and the methodology of foreign language teaching.

The next text that I will focus my attention on in this opinion is entitled "Multiculturalism, Integration Educational Models, Interculturalism" (2023). The author's precision in clarifying differences in the interpretation of concepts that are close (synonymous) in meaning, which, however, have distinctive semantic nuances, is impressive: multiculturalism - educational practices, programs and materials designed to ensure equal education for children from different socio-cultural groups (i.e. what is in effect in educational practice); interculturalism - conditions for the education of minority groups and principles to which teaching, learning and assessment in a multicultural environment should be subject (i.e. what needs to happen in educational practice).

The entire text, which includes various information cores such as analysis of different models of integration; characterization of the advantages and disadvantages of different models; findings why the intercultural education model is most effective in modern socio-cultural conditions, etc., is written from a clearly professional evaluative position, in which the author's personal expert opinion on the benefits of the proposed educational construct in relation to the essence and functions of the Bulgarian secondary school is clearly evident.

The third article, the subject of consideration in this opinion, is entitled "Positive Learning Environment for Digital and Media Literacy Training" (2024). The author's views presented in this text complement and further develop his ideas in texts from previous periods of scientific research. Here, emphasis is placed on the pedagogical analysis of educational phenomena such as active learning, trust between participants in the educational process; attitude towards learners by teachers - all of them should be valued, supported, respected, motivated and stimulated for academic work. As a contribution to the theory and practice of educational processes, the text distinguishes the conceptualization of approaches, methods and means for creating a positive learning environment - the presence of a spiral curriculum; conducting blended learning - with classical pedagogical means and using media; implementing online learning; game-based learning, etc.

The materials which Prof. Danail Danov participated with in this competition have original scientific contributions, the main ones of which I noted in the course of this presentation.

#### Conclusion:

The documents and materials presented by Prof. Danail Kirilov Danov meet all legal requirements. The candidate for professorship has a sufficient number of scientific works. The candidate's works contain original scientific contributions. His theoretical developments have practical applicability.

After reviewing the scientific papers submitted for the competition and analyzing their significance, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend that the Scientific Jury propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University to elect Prof. Danail Kirilov Danov to the academic position of 'professor' at Sofia University in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... (Methodology of teaching a foreign language - English and Turkish).

10.01.2025

(Prof. A. Petrov, PhD)