

# **REVIEW**

**regarding the competition for the academic position of "Professor"  
in professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of Teaching... (Methodology of Foreign Language  
Teaching in Digital Environment – English and Turkish Languages),  
Department of Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching  
Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology  
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Kliment Ohridski",  
published in State Gazette, issue 88/18.10.2024.**

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For the competition for Professor in 1.3 Pedagogy of Teaching... (Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching in Digital Environment – English and Turkish Languages), published in State Gazette, issue 88/18.10.2024, one candidate has submitted documents – Prof. DSc. Danail Kirilov Danov.

## **General review of the submitted materials**

The documentation for the competition corresponds to the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "professor" of the Regulations for the implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

For participation in the competition, the candidate prof. DSc. Danail Danov has presented a list of 13 titles in total, including one monograph and chapters in two collective monographs, one published book on the basis of a defended dissertation for the award of the

scientific degree of "Doctor of Science", nine articles (including those published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases or in edited collective volumes).

### **Information about the candidate**

Danail Danov graduated with a master's degree in 1988 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, specialty "Turkic Studies" and second specialty "English". In 1992 he graduated with a master's degree from Central European University, Prague, in the field of social and political sciences, and in 1994 he received a master's degree in Turkic Studies from the University of London. In 2011 he was awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics) at the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with the topic of the dissertation: "New technologies and learning through the Internet as an alternative to traditional teaching methods". In 2019 Danail Danov was awarded the scientific degree of "Doctor of Science" in 1.2. Pedagogy (Media Pedagogy) from the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at Sofia University with a dissertation on the topic: "Media Literacy: Genesis, Rethinking Experience, Challenges and Perspectives".

His professional career began with editorial work at the Bulgarian National Radio, "Express" Radio and the Bulgarian section of the BBC, Producer at Global Vision Ltd., Executive Director in the Media and Communications Section at the Center for Communications and Human Resources Development. Since 2014 he is part of the team of the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at Sofia University, initially as a Chief Assistant Professor, and subsequently held the academic positions of Associate Professor and Professor.

As a lecturer at Sofia University, Danail Danov develops lecture courses in the following disciplines: "Pedagogy of Artistic and Media Communication", "History and Theory of Public Relations", "Digital Media", "Media Pedagogy", "Inclusive Education", "Media and Information Literacy" for various courses and specialties of Bachelor's degree of the Faculty of

Educational Studies and the Arts, the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology. In the Master's degree of study, he teaches twelve disciplines, some of them in English, all directly related to the profile of the announced competition. Under his scientific supervision, four PhD students successfully defended their dissertations. Danail Danov is a national coordinator, expert and coach in five international projects and has been a member of the Bulgarian Coalition for Media Literacy since 2018 while also lecturing at foreign universities (in Japan, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Germany, Uzbekistan, Slovakia).

### **General review of the scientific work and achievements of the candidate**

Prof. DSc. Danail Danov participates in the competition for “Professor” in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching... (Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching in Digital Environment – English and Turkish Languages) with 13 publications, which by genre and indicators of the minimum national requirements, can be divided as follows:

By Indicator Group A, Prof. Danov has presented a diploma for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (No SU-2011-46/22.12.2011). Under Indicator Group B, a diploma for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in professional field 1.2 Pedagogy (Media Pedagogy) from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (No SU-2019- 6/05.11.2019) has been presented. Under Indicator Group C, the monographic work "Fundamentals of Media Pedagogy: A Guide to the World of Digital Culture and Its Means" (University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023, 168 p.). By Indicator Group D Prof. Danov has submitted 11 publications, a total of 245 points. Citations are listed under Indicator Group E – a total of 120 points. Under Indicator Group F, the candidate in the competition for professor presents a scientific supervision of four PhD students, who have successfully defended their dissertations, participation in national and international projects, a total of 260 points.

The publications submitted for the competition can be divided into the following thematic areas:

- Development of the theory in the field of media literacy (1 monograph, author in 1 collective monograph and 5 articles);
- Learning in digital environment (author in 1 collective monograph and 2 articles);
- Intercultural Communication (3 articles).

The titles included in the submitted documentation, in addition to those required for participation in the competition for professor, are also in the field of media literacy, digital culture and intercultural communication.

### **Content analysis of the scientific and practical achievements of the candidate**

The monograph "Fundamentals of Media Pedagogy: A Guide to the World of Digital Culture and Its Means" presented as a habilitation work (University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023, 168 p., ISBN 978-954-07-5855-8) is dedicated to an undeniably relevant topic in the field of education. To help parents and educators, the author is looking for the reasons why digital tools are becoming increasingly popular in the world of contemporary youth, as well as the importance of media literacy for the overall development of adolescents. Special emphasis is placed on the problem of cyberbullying and media manipulation that users of digital services and tools face on a daily basis. The book contains seven chapters, each of which examines a different aspect of our digitized society in the context of the impact that social media, online games and other Internet applications have on adolescents in the modern world. Interview questions related to the topics of "Social Media", "Protection of Personal Information", "Gaming Online", "Cyberbullying" and "Online Relationships and Sexuality" are included.

In the first chapter of the monograph, the author examines media literacy as a phenomenon and product of the technological development of society and the emergence of digitalization as a term not only in scientific circles, but also in society as a whole. Key concepts

such as "digital by birth" and "digital immigrants" are distinguished. Media pedagogy is presented with its most essential tasks, namely, to identify the media tools used and the habits of their users, to analyze the behavior and ability to assess the credibility of media information from different age groups, to determine whether and to what extent digital technologies can provide opportunities for the development of education and training in the long term. The author's conclusion is that despite the challenges faced by media pedagogy (insufficient understanding of the essence of media literacy and digital culture, lack of experience in this regard on the part of parents, educators, specialists, etc.), it provides opportunities for the development of subjects in the direction of creativity and innovation, safer use of digital media technologies and tools, and making the educational environment more comprehensive and inclusive.

In Chapter two, social media is considered not only as an unlimited opportunity for communication, information, entertainment and education, but also as a source of various problematic situations. Danail Danov presents the social media Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitch, TikTok and WhatsApp in an interesting and entertaining way for readers, providing them with the opportunity to answer questions about each of the media. The correct answers can sometimes surprise even an active user of the respective social network or application. A contributing element is the results of interviews conducted by his students with children on the use of social media, mobile phone ownership, the number of their friends on social networks, as well as the information shared by family members regarding the rules for the use of mobile phones and social media. The opinion of experts, recommendations of teenagers and advice to parents are summarized at the end of each chapter by the author in addition to the conclusions from the data presented.

The third chapter of the monograph presents the current topic of personal data protection on the Internet. According to the author, children need help and more knowledge in this area in order to use the Internet correctly, efficiently and, above all, safely. Danail Danov examines the concept of "online identity", tracing its varieties (personal, professional, social, anonymous and

collective) and distinguishes the "passive" from the "active footprints" that each of us leaves in the virtual environment. Special attention is paid to online positioning as a virtual image, which differs from real identity mostly in social media posts through filtering and the use of editing applications. The author notes the negative impact of this type of activity on the psyche and emotional health of adolescents. Again, through questions and answers, a more comprehensive picture of the topic under discussion is presented, which contributes to obtaining more in-depth information on the issue from readers (parents, adolescents and educators).

Online games are considered in Chapter four as a favorite pastime of children and a source of anxiety and frustration for parents. The author points out the positive and negative aspects of this type of entertainment and gives his "ten pedagogical advice" to parents. The topics of cyberbullying, online relationships and sexuality, media literacy against media manipulation are presented in depth in Chapters five, six and seven of the monograph. Danail Danov examines cyberbullying with its harmful impact on the psyche and normal development of Internet users of all ages (but especially children), providing expert advice on how adults and adolescents can deal with this problem; the opportunities and risks that the online environment provides as part of maintaining emotional relationships; media literacy and its importance as a key competence of consumers in the modern world, who are exposed to media propaganda, misinformation and manipulation on a daily basis.

The monographic research has significant scientific and practical contributions to the development of media pedagogy to help university lecturers, teachers, parents, university students and pupils.

A chapter of a collective monograph and five articles are also devoted to the topic of media literacy. They present an analysis of the state of media literacy in Bulgaria, the development of the science of "media pedagogy", a proven in practice European model for training media literacy coaches, as well as the opportunities that foreign language teaching offers in this area in preschool education.

Learning in digital environment is discussed in one chapter of a collective monograph and two of the articles submitted for review. In them, the author reveals the opportunities and challenges of learning in digital environment and analyzes the experience of this type of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The development of intercultural education, intercultural communication and the effectiveness of the multicultural classroom are discussed in three of the presented articles and working models for modern learning are proposed.

In conclusion, as a content analysis summary of the submitted publications and the scientific and practical achievements of the candidate, I would say that Danail Danov has extensive theoretical knowledge in the scientific field in which he has been developing, as well as extensive practical experience as a lecturer at Sofia University. Prof. DSc. Danail Danov is a scientist well-known in Bulgaria and abroad for his teaching work in three faculties of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and with his publication and project research activities. This statement is proved by the number of noticed citations of his works – 10 in total.

The main scientific and practical contributions of Prof. Danov, according to the materials discussed above, are related to the promotion, circulation and implementation of good practices aimed at mastering key competences in the field of digital and media literacy both by the younger generation and by the future pedagogical staff that the university prepares. The research conducted by Prof. Danov, presented in the habilitation work, stands out as original and significant for all participants in the modern educational process. The author's engaging writing style adds value to the book and makes it accessible to a wide age range of readers. The establishment of intercultural competences in learners and educators and the undeniable connection they have with the development of digital literacy and culture are an essential part of modern foreign language teaching, in which the academic achievements and contributions of the candidate, Prof. Danail Danov, fit in.

### **General conclusion**

Based on the above, I can definitely state that Prof. DSc. Danail Kirilov Danov, candidate in the competition for Professor in 1.3 Pedagogy of Teaching... (Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching in Digital Environment – English and Turkish Languages), announced in State Gazette, issue 88 of 18.10.2024, meets all the requirements for this academic position. I give my positive assessment and 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 Prof. DSc. Danail Kirilov Danov to the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching... (Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching in Digital Environment – English and Turkish Languages).

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