

REVIEW

by **prof. Tanya Borisova**, PhD, DSc, member of the Academic Selection Committee in the selection procedure for awarding the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the area of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field, 1.2. Pedagogy, announced in the State Gazette, issue 81 dated October, 11th 2022, in the Faculty of Education, Trakia University, Stara Zagora

By Ordinance No. 3407/ 24.10. 2022, issued by the Rector of Trakia University, I have been appointed as a member of the Academic Selection Committee in the above selection procedure for awarding the academic position of **Associate Professor** in *the area of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field, 1.2. Pedagogy*.

The only candidate in the selection procedure is assistant professor Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otouzbirova. The submitted documents are in compliance with the requirements of the Law on Scientific Degrees and Titles, as well as the Regulations of Trakia University on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions. At its first meeting, the Academic Selection Committee confirmed the accuracy of the scientific aggregated indicators for the research, teaching and expert work of assistant professor Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otouzbirova. The minimum national requirements under bl. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ODARB, as well as the additional requirements of Trakia University have been fulfilled.

1. Candidate's biodata

In 2000 asst. prof. Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otouzbirova completed her master's degree in English Philology at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski in Sofia. In 2007-2009, she acquired another master's degree in Ecology and

Environmental Protection from the Faculty of Agriculture at Trakia University. In 2016, she defended her PhD dissertation on the topic "Integrative Approach to the Study of English through Environmental Educational Content by Students of Pedagogy". Since 2003, she has been an assistant professor in English at the Faculty of Education in Trakia University where she has successfully integrated the teaching of English with cultural and humane environmental content.

Asst. prof. Dr. Arnaudova-Otoubirova is fluent in English / she holds internationally valuable certificates from Cambridge - a Certificate of Proficiency in English – level C2, and a certificate for teaching Content and Language Integrated Learning/. She has knowledge of Russian and Spanish, as well as a number of certificates from completed courses provided by the British Council (2018) and the University of Winchester (2021). She is a lecturer respected by students, a dedicated colleague, a loyal research partner and a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education.

2. Scientific and professional activities

The candidate's research interests are in the field of general pedagogy and English language teaching methodology, as well as in environmental education as a global topic in the modern world.

Asst. prof. Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otoubirova has participated in national and international conferences. She has presented 11 publications related to the topic of her monograph "English Language and Humane Environmental Education: Interdisciplinary Projections" (3.1.). All the materials bear direct relevance to the selection procedure and fully cover the minimum requirements for the academic position of "associate professor".

The habilitation thesis of asst. prof. Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otoubirova "English Language and Humane Environmental Education: Interdisciplinary Projections", consists of an introduction, a list of abbreviations used in the book, 5 chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendices. The

monograph examines issues related to the teaching of English to students of pedagogy through the application of a content and language integrative approach and the integration of humane environmental content in English language learning. It represents an up-to-date and timely practice-oriented research. It convincingly presents the educational tendency for cross-disciplinary studies as a direct evidence of the impact of the competence approach in the training of students of pedagogy. This is undoubtedly an innovation and a look in the right direction.

The monograph meets all the requirements for academic research. It is based on the latest normative documents and policies in education and is fully compliant with *the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-2030)*. The projections of interdisciplinarity in education, the needs, advantages and challenges related to the introduction of interdisciplinary education are examined; the role of content and language integrated learning in the field of higher education is outlined as a relatively new educational approach; the integrative aspects of humane environmental education in the primary school curricula are successfully analyzed.

The empirical study provides an analysis of the results based on the use of statistical methods in the social sciences, such as: descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation analysis, one-way ANOVA analysis and Student-Fisher's T-test. All statements in the analysis are supported by evidence. The bibliography includes contemporary publications and normative documents. The literary sources in Bulgarian and English represent different research statements on the problems under consideration, which once again emphasizes Dr. Arnaudova's skills in interpreting different theses while defending her own. All citations are correct. I detect no plagiarism.

Asst. prof. Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otoubirzova has presented 22 articles, 3 of which have been published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in

world-renowned databases with scientific information. One of them is in co-authorship. The number of articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes is 18. Four of them are co-authored. Asst. prof. Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otoubirzova has also published a chapter in a collective monograph, as well as a course book for the module "English Language and Culture", where the integrated approach for learning English through cultural content has been applied.

Publications 6.3., 7.12., 7.13., 7.14 and 7.15. are directly related to the subject of her habilitation thesis and combine the teaching and learning of a foreign language (English) with humane and environmental education.

Publications 6.1.; 6.2.; 7.1; 7.7; and 7.8 reflect the integrative projections of English language learning regarding the use of culturally-oriented content in the training of students of pedagogy.

Asst. prof. Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otoubirzova has participated in the project BG051PO001-3.1.07-0025 "Updating and Developing New Curricula in the Disciplines at the Faculty of Education - "Preschool and Primary School Education", "Primary School Education with a Foreign Language", "Social Pedagogy" and "Special Pedagogy", financed under the Operational Programme "Development of Human Resources". She has also studied the relationship between teachers' motivation and foreign language learning in a post-graduate qualification course "Teaching English", as well as the application of the "Communication Skills Assessment Scale" to determine the level of communication between university teachers and pre-service students of pedagogy - a comparison between the Faculty of Education of Trakia University and Sabahatin Zaim University in Istanbul, Turkey /7. 11/.

The factors affecting the cultural integration of English-speaking settlers in south-eastern Bulgaria, as well as the existing intercultural differences and the prerequisites for their overcoming in order to achieve the socio-economic

development of the region, have been studied. (7.9., 7.10.) The study is innovative for the country.

Dr. Arnaudova-Otoubirova has presented 11 citations. Five of them are in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, one of which is co-authored, Six of the citations are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals, out of which 3 are co-authored.

3. Contributions

I accept the contributions outlined by the candidate, which are well systematized as scientific and practice-oriented. I will hereafter emphasize on some of them:

1. Relevance of the introduction of a contemporary educational approach related to the integration of non-linguistic academic disciplines in foreign language education (3.1; 7.12);
2. Examining the impact of the integrated learning of English through cultural and humane environmental content on learners' knowledge and skills (6.1.; 7.12; 7.13);
3. Relevance of the presented subject matter in the candidate's publications in the direction of globalization, as well as in the context of national and European normative documents and policies (3.1.);
4. Application of the competence-based approach in the training of students of pedagogy in a foreign language (3.1.);
5. Examining the role of foreign language teaching for the accumulation of language knowledge, skills and competences, as well as for stimulating the cognitive development of student of pedagogy through the integration of fairy tales in foreign language acquisition (7.1.);
6. Application of the "Communication Skills Assessment Scale" to determine the level of communication between university professors

and in-service students of pedagogy at Trakia University and Sabahatin Zaim University in Istanbul (7.11);

7. An innovative for the country representative survey of the English-speaking settlers in the south-eastern region of Bulgaria regarding the factors influencing their cultural integration in the Bulgarian society and the possible prerequisites for their overcoming (7.9; 7.10.).

4. Recommendations

Asst. Prof. Dr. Anna Otouzbirova has a sound scientific training and the sense of a very good researcher. Added to this is her precise style of a philologist who can easily reach the audience with her accessible and readable language. I recommend subsequent publications on the issues she has been interested in, especially in the field of content and language integrated learning and the role of this approach in improving the linguistic knowledge and skills of students of pedagogical specialties, in developing their multicultural competence and environmental awareness.

5. Conclusion

I have known Dr. Otouzbirova for a long time and I have witnessed her academic growth. I accept the above-mentioned contributions and indisputable professional qualities of Assistant Professor Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otouzbirova in the field of pedagogy and foreign language teaching. Taking into account her competence and academic skills as a researcher and educator, I confidently recommend to the Academic Selection Committee to vote positively for awarding assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otouzbirova the academic rank of Associate Professor in the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences; professional field 1.2. Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of Trakia University, Stara Zagora.

17.02.2023
Stara Zagora

Reviewer:
Prof. Tanya Borisova, PhD, DSc