

REVIEW

**by prof. Romyana Balinova Todorova, PhD,
lecturer in English at the English Studies Department,
Faculty of Humanities, *Konstantin Preslavsky* University of Shumen,
regarding the selection procedure for the academic position of Associate Professor in the
Area of Higher Education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field, 1.2. Pedagogy
at the Department of Language Learning and Information Technologies, Faculty of
Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora**

In the selection procedure, announced in the *State Gazette*, issue 81 dated October, 11th 2022, for the academic position of Associate Professor in the Area of Higher Education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field, 1.2. Pedagogy at the Department of Language Learning and Information Technologies, Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora, there is one candidate: assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova, who has fulfilled the minimal national requirements stated in article 2b, para 2 and 3 from the Law for the Development of Academic Staff as well as in the additional university requirements in article 5 from the Rules for collecting, actualization and use of academic achievements data at Trakia University – Stara Zagora. She is currently a lecturer in English, English and Culture and Ecological Education in English at the Department of Language Learning and Information Technologies, Faculty of Education, Trakia University.

The candidate in the procedure, assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova, has submitted all required documents certifying the compliance of her application with the requirements of the Law about Scientific Degrees and Titles, as well as the Rules of Procedures of Trakia University. The submitted documents confirm the correctness of the aggregated indicators of the scientific data for the research, teaching and expert work of assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova, which correspond fully to the minimum national requirements under bl. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the ODARB, as well as to the additional requirements of Trakia University.

1. Candidate's biodata

Assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova studied English Philology in the English Studies Department at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and got an MA degree in 2000. In 2007-2009 the candidate studied an MA programme in Ecology and Environmental Protection at the Faculty of

Agriculture in Trakia University, Stara Zagora, and acquired an MA degree in Ecology and Environmental Protection.

She was a part-time doctoral student in Theory of Education and Didactics at Trakia University, Stara Zagora and in 2016 she defended successfully her PhD thesis titled *Integrated Approach to the Study of English through Ecological Syllabus to Students of Pedagogy*.

In the years 2001-2003 she worked as a teacher in English at prestigious centres for studying English in Sofia (AVO-3 School of English, Bels&Belin Centre) and at a later stage in Stara Zagora, and at present (since 2003) she has been teaching English at the Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora. Together with general English, Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova teaches English and Culture, as well as English and Ecological Education and Integration of Other Disciplines in the Teaching of English and Humane and Ecological Education.

Apart from English which she knows perfectly well judging by her higher education diploma, she also has a certificate for teaching English at an international level (TESOL). She also has good knowledge of Russian and Spanish. In connection with the topic of her PhD thesis and her habilitation work, assistant professor Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has got certificates from courses in Great Britain, as follows: from a course in Integrated Learning in Cambridge (2013) and from a postgraduate qualification course in Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law at the University of Winchester (2019-2021).

2. Academic and professional activities

The candidate's academic interests are in the field of general pedagogy and methodology of teaching English closely related to her duties as a teacher in English to students of Primary School Education with a Foreign Language (English).

Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova's academic and professional activities are related to her participation in national and international conferences with papers published in books of proceedings. She also published an electronic course book connected to the issues posed in her PhD thesis and her habilitation work. A great number of her publications (11) are closely related to the topic of her monograph titled „Английски език и хуманно-екологично образование: Интердисциплинарни проекции” (*English Language and Humane and Ecological Education: Interdisciplinary Projections*) (2023). Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has participated in a number of university, nationally funded projects and international projects and Erasmus programmes. Project BG051PO001-4.3.04 Developing Electronic Forms for Distance Learning in Higher Education under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme back in 2014 has undoubtedly helped her in the latest Covid-19 pandemic situation.

2.1. Monograph

Assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova's monograph, presented for the selection procedure, „Английски език и хуманно-екологично образование: Интердисциплинарни проекции” (*English Language and Humane and Ecological Education: Interdisciplinary Projections*) (2023) consists of an introduction, list of the abbreviations used in the book, 5 chapters, conclusion, references and appendices. It discusses issues related to the studying and teaching of English to students from pedagogical specialities through cultural and humane and ecological content in an interesting way of integrating English into other disciplines. This is a monograph aimed at students of pedagogy, who are about to teach a foreign language.

The theory and practice related to the investigated issues are presented in a mutual bond. The research is quite topical and timely as it definitely has a practical and applied orientation, which makes it even more valuable for contemporary foreign language teaching as it combines elements related not only to the teaching of English but draws special attention to ecological and humane issues. This educational tendency of combining two or more disciplines into one is oriented to the global issues about the earth and nature, which increases the qualities of the monograph even more. This is an undeveloped field and there is a lot more to be added to it.

The monograph is very well structured, following all the requirements about such an academic study. All statements are grounded and well supported by a rich illustrative material, consisting of tables, diagrams, schemes and statistical data.

What is worth mentioning is that the latest normative documents and policies of different educational institutions are presented and in this respect, the research is in accordance with the *Strategic Framework for Developing of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-2030)*, which includes the application of STEM- and STEAM-based education pedagogies on the basis of the STEM school centres created in 2020 for developing competencies in the field of mathematics, sciences and technologies.

There is also an overview of the ecological and the humane education with their advantages and challenges and the good practices in other countries in the world are presented. Knowledge and skills in the field of the respective foreign language with the ones in the field of ecological and humane education are well combined.

Together with the more theoretical part of the research, there is a practically oriented part connected with the conducting of an empirical study by applying mathematical and statistical methods of analysis used in social sciences in the processing of empirical data and descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and “Student”-Fischer

t-test used in the summary of the experiment results. The applied statistical programs are quite a lot which speaks about the candidate's orientation in the mechanisms for summarizing the data.

The list of references is quite exhaustive and includes printed books and articles and internet sources most of which quite recent. It contains publications by researchers from abroad and from Bulgaria and this helps comparing studies in the same field from different perspectives. This fact speaks of the candidate's serious and thorough theoretical background on the investigated issues.

The themes of the monograph as well as of her PhD thesis are quite topical as they correspond to the state educational requirements as well as to the EC policies in the area of education.

2.2. Other publications

Apart from the monograph, assistant professor Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has 22 articles, out of which 3 are published in academic journals, refereed and indexed in world famous databases, out of which 1 in co-authorship; 18 papers, published in non-refereed journals with academic reference or published in refereed collective volumes, out of which 4 in co-authorship, 1 chapter in a collected monograph and a course book.

In the field of interdisciplinary sciences (combining of teaching English with humane, ecological and cultural education), on the same topic as her habilitation work are also 3.1., 6.3., 7.12., 7.13., 7.14 и 7.15.

The various forms of stereotypical representation and interpretation of culture of the North American Indians, as well as the issues related to their identity and cultural diversity are dwelled upon in a course book in English Language and Culture *Language and Culture Aspects of the English-speaking World* (21.1.) as well as in accompanying publications (6.1., 6.2., 7.2., 10.1.). Apart from that the curriculum in the disciplines English Language and English Language and Culture are updated by developing new didactic materials under BG051PO001-3.1.07-0025 project titled Updating and developing new curricula of the disciplines in the Pedagogical Faculty – “Preschool and Primary School Education”, “Primary School Education with a Foreign Language”, “Social Pedagogy”, “Special Pedagogy”, financed by Human Resources Development Operational Programme.

Another field in which Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has got a publication, which is also a contribution to the teaching of future pedagogues, is related to the integration of fairy tales in foreign language teaching for accumulation of linguistic knowledge, skills and competences as well as for stimulation of students-pedagogues' cognitive development (7.1.).

She has papers in the field of postgraduate qualification “Teacher in English”, oriented toward the interrelation between teachers’ motivation and success in acquiring a foreign language (7.3., 7.5.).

Dr. Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has a publication related to her participation in and use of “Scale for communicative skills’ evaluation“ for defining the level of communication among university lecturers and students of pedagogical specialities at the Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora and a University in Istanbul, which will enable the improvement of the effectiveness of education in other areas of university education as well (7.11.).

A couple of other publications (7.9., 7.10.) are dedicated to a conducted survey on the English speaking settlers in the south-eastern region of Bulgaria, which is innovative for our country. What is analysed are the factors, having some influence on foreigners’ integration in the Bulgarian society, the existing intercultural differences and the necessary prerequisites for their overcoming. Along this line, some possibilities for enriching the intercultural exchange in a specific historical and geographical region, as well as for its social and cultural development are outlined.

Dr. Arnaudova-Otuzbirova has got 11 citations altogether, as follows: 5 of them in monographs and collected papers with scientific peer review out of which 1 in co-authorship, and 6 in non-refereed journals with scientific peer review out of which 3 in co-authorship.

3. Recommendations

Some recommendations for further studies can be related to the comparative analysis of ecologically oriented texts in English and Bulgarian, which will enable the researcher to compare their lexical and grammatical structures as well as the ways for representing one and the same or similar information through the prism of both cultures and through various linguistic manifestations and this will definitely be quite a thorough investigation from a different perspective.

4. Contributions

The academic and practical and application contributions in the presented publications belong to the following dimensions: integrative projections of foreign language teaching, English and culture, humane and ecological education.

The themes are quite topical and timely in the world of globalization and dynamic political, social, economic, or in a word, global processes with their corresponding consequences not only for the community in which they take place but on a global scale.

Dr. Anna Arnaudova-Otuzbirova's habilitation work has a theoretical as well as practical orientation and value for foreign language teaching as well as for pedagogy in general and also for the integration of ecological, cultural and humane content in education and teaching of a foreign language presented to students of pedagogy.

In the field of integrated disciplines, the following publications 3.1., 7.12. и 7.13 also have the same contributions.

Another contribution has to do with the integration of fairy tales in foreign language teaching for the sake of accumulation of language knowledge, skills and competencies as well as for stimulating the cognitive development of students-pedagogues (7.1.).

In the field of postgraduate qualification "teacher of English" her contributions are oriented towards the interrelation of motivation and success in acquiring a foreign language (7.3.).

Another contribution of hers is related to her use of "Scale for communicative skills' evaluation" for defining the level of communication among university lecturers and students of pedagogical specialities at the Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora and a University in Istanbul, which will enable the improvement of the effectiveness of education in other areas of university education as well (7.11.).

Some publications (7.9., 7.10.) mentioned earlier are related to an interesting and useful conducted survey on the English speaking settlers in the south-eastern region of Bulgaria, which is innovative for our country. What is analysed are the factors having some influence on foreigners' integration in the Bulgarian society, the existing intercultural differences and the necessary prerequisites for their overcoming. Some possibilities for enriching the intercultural exchange in a specific historical and geographical region, as well as for its social and cultural development are outlined.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I declare that, the above mentioned qualities of assistant professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova, as well as her academic and professional orientation in the field of the education and foreign language teaching as regards her publication activity and her knowledgeability and skills for conducting an academic analysis fulfil the requirements of the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and its accompanying regulations. That is the reason why, on the basis of the documents and the academic works presented for the selection procedure and after analyzing their significance and academic contributions, I recommend to the Academic Selection Committee to vote **POSITIVELY** for awarding the **academic rank ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR to assistant**

***professor Dr. Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova-Otuzbirova in the area of Higher Education:
1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field, 1.2. Pedagogy at the Department of Language
Learning and Information Technologies, Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara
Zagora.***

23 February 2023

Reviewer:

/prof. Dr. R. Todorova/