

CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES IN LINGUODIDACTIC STUDIES

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On the 25th October 2019 in the Rectorate of “St. Kliment Ohridski” University of Sofia the “Linguodidactic perspectives” international scientific conference dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Department of Foreign Language Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages at “St. Kliment Ohridski” University of Sofia was held.

The Chair of the Organisation Committee, prof. DSc Dimitar Vesselinov, opened the scientific forum, pointing out the significance of the anniversary for him and for the department’s team and expressed his gratitude towards all who had honoured the event.

The Sofia University Vice-rector, prof. PhD Reneta Bozhankova, congratulated the Department, the guests and the participants in the conference, pointing out that she did it not only in the capacity of a Vice-rector, but also as a philologist, a linguist, and as a foreign language teacher. Prof. Bozhankova read a congratulatory address on behalf of the Sofia University Rector, prof. DSc. Anastas Gerdzhikov on the 70th anniversary of the Department of Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, as well as on the organization of the “Linguodidactic perspectives” International Scientific Conference. In his address the Rector underlines his belief that it is the carrying out of scientific forums that is the best way to commemorate such important events.

Prof. Gerdzhikov places emphasis on the department’s achievements during the past seven decades. It is from it that thousands of pedagogical specialists and teachers of all languages taught in the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies have started. Preparing highly qualified specialists, the department has proven to be a long-standing source of knowledge. In his words these years are filled with significance, with new paths, and serious achievements made. Prof. Gerdzhikov also points out that mastery of a foreign language and knowledge of the culture enrich our world, make distances shorter and we become closer. Through the joint efforts of the foreign language teachers in schools and universities, translators, interpreters and artisans the cultural and scientific collaboration among peoples is strengthened and deepened. Mastery of a foreign language is also a key to world knowledge. The

rector highly appreciates the department's work for preserving the interest in learning foreign languages and congratulates it on its high achievements.

Congratulatory speeches were held also by representatives of the embassies of the Azerbaidjan Republic, the Kingdom of Morrocco, the Kingdom of Spain, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Republic of Greece, the Republic of Romania, the Republic of Turkey. Congratulatory addresses to the organisers were made also by the head of the Culture-information centre of the Republic of North Macedonia in Bulgaria, Ms. Yanka Takeva, chair of the Bulgarian union of teachers, the head of the British Council, Ms. Lyubov Kostova, the head of the "Az Buki" National Publishing House for Education and Science and others.

In addition, a lot of congratulatory addresses by Bulgarian universities, faculties and departments of the University of Sofia, as well as by departments at the Faculty of classical and modern philologies were received.

The head of the Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department Assoc. Prof. PhD Milena Yordanova also delivered her congratulatory address, stating that the 70th anniversary, marked by the "Linguodidactic Perspectives" International Scientific Conference, shows that the department has travelled a long way, has stood the test of time and has reached an honorary age, which quite naturally gives it a place among the leading Bulgarian centres, dealing with foreign language teacher training.

Assoc. Prof. Yordanova reminded that with an executive act of the Ministry of Education of 1949 the University of Sofia has been entitled to teach and train students in a pedagogical module, awarding philologists the profession of "teacher". Assoc. Prof. Yordanova underlined that thus the Sofia University has become the first educational institution to be entitled to teach and train students to become teachers, since up to that moment training foreign language teachers for state schools had been in the purview of the Ministry of Education. Assoc. Prof. Yordanova added that that date marks the beginning of the academic courses in Foreign Language Teaching Methodology and the establishment of the department.

In her speech she also pointed out that the Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department is the only department directly connected with all other departments, majors and languages taught at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies, which gives it the role of a mediator.

The Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department is directly linked to an important part of the Faculty's users – The Ministry of Education and Science, state and private schools, universities, language centres and others. Finally, Assoc. Prof. Yordanova wished all participants and attendants successful and useful discussions.

The scientific forum continued with the Georgian Ambassador Ms. Tamuna Lilulashvili's report on the topic of The Modern-Day Language and Educational Policy of the Republic of Georgia.

In his speech about the foreign language teaching methodology in the Sofia University prof. DSc Dimitar Vesselinov stated that organizing the “Linguodidactic perspectives” International conference to commemorate the 70th anniversary of introducing foreign language teaching methodology to Sofia University in the form of an academic discipline had been a strategic task for the Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages and for Bulgarian Linguodidactology, since this high scientific forum presents the opportunity to demonstrate the Bulgarian foreign language teaching methodologists’ undoubted success nationally, regionally and worldwide and to establish the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies’ leading place as the main national centre for high achievements in the sphere of modern and classical language teachers’ professional training.

Prof. Vesselinov reminded that foreign language teaching at “St. Kliment Ohridski” University of Sofia has had a tradition longer than a century. It started at the History-Philology Faculty in 1888, the year the university was established, with the introduction of French, German, Latin and Greek language teaching.

Prof. Vesselinov also pointed out that the Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department offers a pedagogical module for acquiring a teacher qualification as part of the BA programmes at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, which is in accordance with the most up-to-date requirements for acquiring the “Foreign language teacher” professional qualification. The department also offers an MA programme in Foreign Language Teaching Methodology and a doctoral school in Foreign Language Teaching Pedagogy. Prof. Vesselinov added that this provides the opportunity to place accent on both the future highly qualified teachers’ practical training and the linguodidactologists’ scientific development.

At the “Linguodidactic Perspectives” International conference the challenges and prospects for the contemporary foreign language teaching methodology were presented, unquestionably delineating Bulgarian contribution to the development of theoretical knowledge and its practical application in teaching and training highly qualified foreign language teachers who acquire multilateral intercultural and professional competences.

Leading figures in Linguodidactology presented reports within the scientific forum.

Among these prof. DSc. Dimitar Vesselinov’s, prof. DSc. Todor Shopov’s and Assoc. prof. PhD Milena Yordanova’s reports stood out.

Prof. DSc. Dimitar Vesselinov’s report was on the topic of *Foreign Language Teaching Methodology at Sofia University*. It deals with a historical overview of the development of foreign language teaching at the university, the genesis and the realization of the idea for establishing a separate Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department, the founding of the Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies by prof. Ana Ilieva, the realization of the Entrance-exit Level project by prof. Pavel Patev

and the development of the department since till present day, presenting the present-day members of the department according to their spheres of interest in science and scientific achievements.

Prof. DSc. Todor Shopov's report was on the topic of *Creativity and Innovation in Contemporary Second Language Teaching*. It deals with the most up-to-date tendencies in the contemporary science of Methodology. It reflects the contemporary post-method era by placing accent on creativity and innovation it is characterized by.

Assoc. Prof. PhD Milena Yordanova's report was on the topic of Hyusein Mahmudov's Contribution to The Development of Turkish Language Teaching Methodology in Bulgaria. It points out Hüseyn Mahmudov's significance as the person who has introduced Turkish language teaching methodology for the first time in Bulgaria.

Prof. DSc. Lyudmila Karpenko defended her view on foreign language teaching as a new language world. The question of the typology of the instruments for ensuring quality in educational programmes was viewed by A. Moldzhanova, G. Niyazova and E. Kopishev. Prof. DSc. Siyka Chavdarova-Kostova viewed the social inclusion and the role of integrative education of the asylum-seekers and the refugees in Bulgaria through Bulgarian language teaching. In this way a highly topical issue in the contemporary dynamic world was raised.

Prof. DSc. Mariana Georgieva's report was on the emotive interjections in their function as protopredicates. Assoc. Prof. DSc. Danail Danov viewed the contemporary views on the relationship between media communication and creative teaching. The use of ICT and media in teaching is highly topical on the threshold of the third decade of 21st century. Assoc. Prof. PhD Elena Slavova stated her views on the application of native literary texts in foreign language teaching. Their role is important for students' acquaintance with the living language in written text. Assoc. Prof. Zhana Krusteva's report viewed ethnic stereotypes in French and Bulgarian languages. Parallels were drawn, pointing to the worldviews of the French-speaking and the Bulgarian-speaking communities. Prof. PhD Tatyana Angelova pointed out the role of the procedures of self-evaluation in teacher training. Contemporary methodological science brings learner autonomy to the front and thus self-evaluation is of utmost importance. Prof. DSc. Irena Krusteva presented the French traductology school through the prism of linguodidactic archaeology. She spoke more concretely about the University of Lisle's traductology school and the role of text deconstruction in the process of translation.

Martin Henzelmann's report on the standardization of the Bunev's language in Serbia was of particular interest. The findings and conclusions on the linguistic situation in our West neighbouring country present unquestionable contribution to the development of contemporary microlinguistics, where our colleague Henzelmann's studies are met with particular interest. Assoc. Prof. PhD Vessela Belcheva and Assoc. Prof. PhD Svilen Stanchev's report viewed the educational mission of the Ger-

man language textbooks of the beginning of the 20th century in the context of the Linguodidactic archaeology, developed by the Department of Foreign Language Teaching Methodology. Gloria Bakardzhieva presented reading as a basic language skill and a central learning activity in Quintillian's linguodidactic doctrine. Ioannis Sotiriadis' report viewed the role of "Second chance" language schools in the Greek educational system. Tsvetanka Dilkova PhD presented the contemporary aspects of English language learning in academic environment. Mihal Pavlov's report viewed the role of the professional metaphor in comparative perspective through the prism of Spanish, English and Bulgarian languages. Assoc. prof. PhD spoke in her report about the role of bilingual education in Geography.

In conclusion, the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Foreign Language Teaching Methodology Department through the "Linguodidactic Perspectives" international scientific conference has proven undisputedly its significance as an event synthesizing the history and present of linguodidactic studies as well as the directions for "recourse" development of studies in the field of language education. It is through such scientific forums that an incentive for heuristic improvement of contemporary theory and practice, and application of workable practices for optimizing foreign language teaching are provided.

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