

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Regarding the thesis on

From The Theory Of Communication To Social Science

By Prof. Plamen Kirov Ivanov, PhD

To be awarded *Doctor of Science* degree in

Higher Education Area 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,

3.4 Professional Field *Social Activities*,

Scientific Specialty *Organization and Management Outside the Field of Material Production (Social Activities)*

Assessor: Acad.Prof. Petar Dikov Petrov, PhD

Member of the Academic Board and Assessor

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1. Brief information about the candidate

After getting acquainted with the autobiography of Prof. Plamen Kirov Ivanov, I am left with the impression that throughout the period of his training and professional activity, he purposefully "has been upgrading" in order to come to the current defense. At first he was a part-time assistant at the University of Shumen, and after entering a competition, he became a full-time assistant professor. In 2010 he earned a doctoral degree in the professional field of Theory of Education and Didactics (Social Work). From 2012 to 2016 he was already Associate Professor, and since 2017 - a full Professor. It can be reasonably argued that he has great merits for the establishment of social pedagogy in our country. The reason for this statement is proved by his numerous publications in this field, single-authored and co-authored as well as his participation and contribution to many international and national projects,

including internal university ones. His lectures and exercises, trainings and workshops are too wide. To substantiate this statement, to make it more solid and believable I would like to say that when I was elected Head of the Department of Social Pedagogy at Sofia University, I soon realized what a 'hedgehog' I was ... embracing. The 'pure didactic' had to become an 'andragogue' and a 'geragog' in 'fierce rivalry' with professors M. Andreev and Pl. Radev, who was the best? In the end, I can't help but be proud to say I have been awarded a Certificate of Merit for the development of social pedagogy in Bulgaria. Yes, my *Didactics* in its four revised editions was and continues to be a table book for students from most universities in our country, and if the Berlin Wall had not fallen, it would have been translated and distributed into all former Soviet Union (according to its reviewers I.J. Lerner and V.P. Bespalko).

2. Architectonics of the dissertation

Prof. Ivanov's peer-reviewed work is, in my view, structured in a very non-standard way - short introduction, relevance of the problem, two chapters, conclusion, final statements and literature, insofar as in many of such works the theoretical and experimental part are differentiated. Most likely, for him the second chapter performs the 'function' to 'prove' the 'hypothesis' raised by him and the goals and tasks formulated by him. The literature reference includes 203 literary sources, of which 113 in German and English, 80 in Russian and the rest in Bulgarian. Here, too, the colleague acts unconventionally, dividing the literary sources into 3 groups, which, in my opinion, greatly facilitates the reader to whom one of the foreign languages is more 'understandable'.

In the introduction, the author points out that communication is too often seen either as a very general concept or as a very narrow concept. However, in order to achieve successful communication, it is necessary to consider it in a much broader, interdisciplinary plan. The relevance of the problem focuses on an attempt to 'mark' the different interpretations of communication, starting with Aristotle and reaching the present day. Attention is also paid to the etymological significance of this category. On this basis, the hypothesis, the object and the subject of the research, its goals, tasks, methods and theoretical approaches are formulated.

The first chapter Symbolic Media Communicative Knowledge includes four paragraphs, which make a scrupulous analysis of the forms and ways of communication as a basis for the theory of communicative and mental systems, focusing on language and writing as communicative means, comparing them as axes of communicative differentiation and discussing the telecommunication environment of modern societies. Chapter Two, Truth and Knowledge as an Environment for Communicative Success, decomposes in six paragraphs the extremely important characteristics of truth and knowledge in great detail. The conclusion and the final statements contain the quintessence of this extensive work. The author's ability to bring out the most important productions, which result from his extensive analysis of the category 'communication', stands out. In clarifying the above problems, the author demonstrates a very good knowledge and interpretation of the more significant literary sources and the desire to give different, often contradictory opinions regarding the categories under consideration.

By synthesizing the structure of this, in my view, significant work, I cannot fail to ignore an equally broad category, which was 'born' with the category of 'communication' – 'social communication'. In the monograph Personal Communication and Education, Sofia, 2014, as well as in a number of other publications of mine, I substantiate the assertion that the category of communication has an integrative character. It is a major category not only for pedagogy, but also for philosophy, psychology and all other sciences in the humanities. Not only me, but many other scientists usually compare these two categories, with some authors considering communication as a broader category, one of the components of which is the communicative one, while others - just the opposite. For example, G.M. Andreeva distinguishes three components of social communication: communicative, interactive and perceptual, B.F.Lomov: informational, practical and affective, Ya.L.Kolominski: cognitive, behavioural and affective. There are many scientists (mostly psychologists) who consider communication and personal communication as synonyms. I am deeply convinced that some would definitely argue whether pedagogical communication does have much deeper interpretations. Personally, I have several publications dedicated to dialogic communication in education. That is why, personally, I remain puzzled why my colleague Prof. Ivanov has ignored this 'unavoidable' category of the humanities.

3. Relevance of the problem

It is my deep conviction that the dissertation topic developed by Prof. Ivanov is **extremely relevant** in accordance with the concept of **neo-paradigmatic education and lifelong learning**. Already in the last decades of the XX and especially in the current, XXI century, the so-called Conventional Pedagogy has gradually begun to be a systematic, scientific, modern pedagogy, sometimes called the philosophy of education. The modernization of pedagogy can be defined as total, as it covers almost all its 'branches'. At a new, much higher level are research in the field of General Didactics, Andragogy and Geragogy, the so-called 'methods and ways' of teaching, Special Pedagogy, etc. On a new, relatively higher level is Social Pedagogy in our country as well. In modern real life, computer-based learning and e-learning are, in my opinion, the "structure-determining paradigm" for minimizing the shortcomings of the classical type of learning, for overcoming external, compulsory motivation to learn, for preventing students from falling behind and dropping out of school, to take into account the real learning opportunities of each student. It is no coincidence that we are currently talking about a certain constellation or poly-approach in which the current relatively separate approaches, learning by doing and personality-oriented approach, are successfully combined with the synergetic, competence approach, with the constructivist educational paradigm, which is essentially the methodological basis of the modern system of interactive teaching methods, of multimedia pedagogy ... Everything I have said so far has undoubtedly enabled **Prof. Ivanov to raise his research to a multifunctional level, covering the 'many' possibilities for creating theories of communication in the generalizing category of 'social science', which undoubtedly integrates Pedagogy.**

4. Knowledge of the state of the problem and approaches to its solution

Prof. P. Ivanov's ability to **logically and consistently** develop the issues of his dissertation is clearly highlighted. In my opinion, **at an extremely high abstract level, he very skillfully applies higher theoretical analysis and synthesis**. The overall exposition of the work contains **original theoretical analyses and experimental solutions to philosophical, psychological and pedagogical 'cases', which allows for the specific 'autocognitive' style of author's scientific writing to be highlighted, leading 'always' to find 'the right answers!'** Furthermore, most likely, my colleague Prof. Ivanov is guided

by the assertion that ‘general (universal) methodology differs in abstraction from the specifics of the phenomena in one or another subject area ... ‘ (see P. Petrov, Didactics, S., 2001, p.21). In other words, the category ‘social science’ is extremely general and includes not only the sciences in the Humanities, but also Mathematics, Logic, Ethics, Physics, Biology, Cybernetics, etc. It is in this intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary plan that the category of communication has been analyzed. With its two ‘stories’. I think, the author's enviable ability to organically combine the hermeneutic with the phenomenological approaches stands out here, thanks to which generalizing conceptual reflection is formed, which could be considered as a collective ‘point’ for continuously raising the level of analysis of this category.

5. Main contributions

I confirm my deepest conviction that for the first time a significantly wide-ranging issue has been studied, which has remained outside of Bulgarian scientists’ field of view.

6. The Abstract

The Abstract reflects synthetically and objectively the content of the thesis. The author has indicated 4 significant publications on the topic!

7. Remarks and recommendations

I have no significant remarks and recommendations either with regard to the abstract or with regard to the dissertation in general. However, I have some sort of ‘concern’. So far, I have ‘calmed down’ that one of my significant contributions to the renewal of didactic issues is the assertion that learning is inherently realized through social communication, ie. that learning itself is at the same time social communication. ‘Social communication takes place between the teacher and the students, which is not a means of learning, it is not a parallel process, but the very existence of learning’. (Cited in p. 155). On the other hand, for example, in the latest Dictionary of Psychology by L. Desev (2021), it is explained that ‘proxemics is a set of forms of social communication in spatial-temporal and temporal modalities of communication and their corresponding scientific direction in the psychology of nonverbal communication’. Now I realize that I must have been mistaken so that the category of ‘communication’ has completely eaten the category of ‘social communication’! Isn't there any

'specificity' of human communication, unlike, for instance, the 'communication' between animals or between machines !!!

8. General conclusion

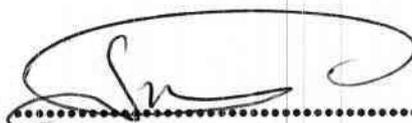
In general, the peer-reviewed work is a significantly integrative theoretical study with a certain practical value, especially for the socio-pedagogical sphere, for the modernization of the whole pedagogical science. It clearly highlights Prof. Ivanov's ability to justify his original concept and to put into practice the ones raised by him. The work fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application, as well as the minimum scientometric indicators.

The aforementioned gives me sufficient grounds to recommend to the Honorable members of the Academic Scientific Board to award the author Prof. Plamen Kirov Ivanov, PhD, the scientific degree of **Doctor of Science in 3.4. Professional field of Social Activities; Higher Education Area Social, Economic and Legal Sciences; Scientific Specialty Organization and Management Outside the Sphere of Material Production (Social Activities).**

29 .07. 2021 г.

Sofia

Asessor:



(Acad. Prof. Peter Petrov, Ph.D)