

**Opponent's review of the habilitation work entitled:
“English as an International Vehicle; a Glottodidactic Approach”**

by

PhDr. Krzysztof POŁOK, PhD.

Opponent: Doc. PhDr. Dorota Chłopek, PhD.

Dr. Krzysztof Polok has submitted a habilitation work to the Scientific Committee of the Pedagogical Faculty of UKF Nitra and requested that a habilitation process be carried out. As an opponent of his habilitation material, I will review his teaching habitus and evaluate his research achievements with the aim of expressing officially my view about his qualities concerning the qualification of a habilitated doctor at UKF in the Specialization Field Didactics 1.1.10.

Dr. Krzysztof Polok has taught English at the University of Bielsko-Biala, Poland since 2005. He received his PhD in English Studies at the University of Silesia, Poland in 2002 and has been actively publishing his scientific results in national and international journals and publications. He has participated in numerous national and international conferences since 2000 with topics ranging from Young Learners English language teaching, ESP teacher training and ESP assessment to elementary school and secondary learning, CLIL and TFL to teaching strategies and academic writing. Dr. Krzysztof Polok has supervised around 120 BA and MA theses in the course of the past 13 years.

As appears from the submitted materials illustrating the scope of his research interests, Dr. Krzysztof Polok's interests focus mostly on the topics concerning the development of English, especially the ways English is to be considered as a language of international strength. It is from this perspective that Dr. Polok approaches the glottodidactic domain and discusses his research in the area. The salient questions concerning teachers' language awareness as well as the ways teachers' level of bilingualism influences the growth of language within the learners' linguistic behaviour and – at the same time – affects their levels of language awareness are the ones that seem to occupy Dr. Polok's research area. These are among others the key ideas to be found in the habilitation work which he submitted to the Scientific Committee of the Pedagogical Faculty of UKF Nitra.

The submitted habilitation work is a published monograph entitled “English as an International Vehicle; a Glottodidactic Approach” which summarizes his research interest and findings in the field of the modern concept of teaching functional and ICC-covering English (ELF). The scope of the research areas that are to be discovered there bridges glottodidactics with glottophilosophy, as in practically all the chapters a handful of analytical remarks of philosophical nature can be found.

The reviewed monograph contains eight chapters, each of them discussing a different aspect of English seen as an International Language. In this way the book appears to be a strong voice in the ongoing discussion concerning the position of English in the world.

One of important aspects of the book is the way the position concerning the roots of the so-called functional English (as contrasted to the communicative one) has been shown. The Author's discussion on the ways English seen as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been perceived in the world as well as the hypotheses raised by him are definitely worth being considered. Here again worth considering are the reasons for the application of the findings on the ways teaching ELF is to be seriously considered elicited one after the other.

The first chapter, the one on ELF, functions as a form of introduction to the remaining ones. All of them present a different face related to the ways English, seen as an international vehicle, is to be dealt with in schools. The Author not only describes a number of fundamental issues concerning the functioning of English in schools, but also produces many critical remarks revealing his – based on everyday educational practice – sense of observation.

The approach assumed by the Author is his basic assumption that English just like all other languages emerges from culture and it is thus the culture that is to be cherished first of all when the teaching of the language is to be considered. This approach is strongly underlined in practically all the chapters of the monograph. The Author's beliefs that teaching language-embedding culture must not be neglected are commonly verbalized even in the chapters when he describes his research concerning the teaching of English to pre-school learners.

Actually, the last two chapters of the book seem to be the most interestingly written since both of them are related to the Author's research carried out by him. The first of them widely discusses the position of teaching English to young learners and the Author's conclusions indicating that the application of school-oriented techniques of teaching are not the ones truly helpful to such learners sound not only realistic, but are also well-grounded. His suggestion that it is the immersion technique that should appear the most beneficial to such a group of learners is very well grounded by the Author.

The problems discussed in the last chapter concentrate on distance learning/teaching and are also based on the Author's research-relating experiences concerning this form of language education. It is in the conclusions formed on this experiences that the Author suggests an interesting form of educational behaviour to be applied in the moment such commonly met language students are to be educated. The Author's stress on the students' involvement in the whole educational process, as well as the facilitation-aimed activities of the teachers, who should also feel responsible for their learners' success, make this chapter a needy conclusion of the whole monograph. In this way, one more functional way of making the learners knowledgeable about the language has been analysed and offered for the purposes of open discussion within the experts interested in it; in this way, also,

the Author's voice concerning the ways of teaching English as a means of international communication, that should match the expectations of current school attending pupils on the one hand and their parents on the other has been presented in a competent and proficient way.

The monograph closes with an exhaustive list of references and research studies on the topic being the central vehicle of the monograph. It is a nice and competent discussion of a representative selection of current research studies which are relevant to the reflective analyses of the Author in order to carry out a realistic presentation of the issues involved, which appears to be one more positive aspect of the reviewed book.

I evaluate the habilitation work as an important contribution for the benefit of both students and experts who need to acquire the norms of teaching various aspects of ICC-approached ELF. **I recommend the monograph be submitted for defense**, and after the successful defense of the habilitation work and the completed habilitation procedure, **I recommend the granting of the title "associate professor" /docent/ in the Specialization Field Didactics 1.1.10** to Dr. Krzysztof Polok.

The proposed topic of discussion for Dr. Krzysztof Polok is:

Description of the ways in which stereotypes can enrich the English language leading to its internationalization

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doc. PhDr. Dorota Chłopek, PhD.