

SHORT REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Atanas Atanasov

On the competition for Associated Professor

In professional field 8.4 Theater and Film Arts /Stage Speech/

With candidate Dr. Todor Ivanov Dimitrov-Mechkarski

1. I assume all the requested conditions for participation in the contest for the academic position announced by NATFA “Kr. Sarafov” are met.
2. I accept the self-assessment of Todor Dimitrov-Mechkarski about the contributions of “Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech”.

“Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech” is an ambitious research project. In most cases, the term “ambition” is applied to a definition of an act that does not correspond to the real capabilities of the person. In the introduction to his work Dr. Mechkarski explicitly emphasized that: “The presented work does not claim to be exhaustive in terms of concepts, nor comprehensive in terms of sources cited”. I am inclined to accept this modest remark of his. Modest insofar as the work, with its size and qualities, is not the next one but the first which proves its theoretical and practical necessity with all the qualities of a professional theatrical glossary.

According to the author, the monograph lays the foundations of a voice and speech training in a systematic pedagogical methodology for the training in Stage Speech. I deem it necessary to add that the result of Dr. Todor Mechkarski’s work reflects his remarkable consistency and erudition in the thorough research activity fixed upon words and speech, and the aspects of their technological and semantic structure.

The logically fixed definition of linguistic terms is the upshot of a purposeful long-term work. The path to the contributions of Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech monograph is formed by the practical pedagogic work of its author, but it is also a normal act after his numerous publications in specialized issues, and particularly after “The Thought Processes – Primary Energy of Sounding Speech”. His precise to meticulous creative approach is the basis of all projects implemented by Dr. Todor Mechkarski. From analytical interpretation of the verbal stage expression to its practical application. From nuances and semantic meanings of sound, syllable, word and phrase to articulation verbal and rhythmic score.

In my introduction to the print edition of the monograph I noted that for me, it is also an emotional experience related to the personality of its author. The reasons are many. They are not a subject of the present academic short review but only on condition that they are not a result of many years of our joint teamwork at NATFA “Kr. Sarafov”. I find that following the traditions, experience, and achievements of generations of teachers is a sign of uncompromising professionalism in the seventy-year long history of Stage Speech Department. From Vladimir Trendafilov to the youngest colleagues. In this sense, I note the

seemingly unnecessary presence of professional respect for the first teachers and the ethics/moral philosophy inherent in Dr. Mechkarski, as a quality of the author and his work.

The qualities of “Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech” are the result of the pedagogical experience and knowledge the author has gained over the years of his study as well as his ability to structure and use them as his methodological principles in teaching students.

For Dr. Todor Mechkarski, the subject of Stage Speech is “an interdisciplinary, theoretical-practical and dynamically developing field of theater education”. No statement could be definitely defended if the subject has deliberately restricted his personal movement beyond the fields of professional tools already mastered. In this case, the defense is successful. I find it to be the result also of:

1. The author’s interest towards cognitive psychology and its practical benefits in training processes.
2. The acquired master’s degree in Speech Therapy.

Professional qualification in this specialty increases the opportunities to determine the origin and correction of dialectal and /or/ physiological voice and speech problems. My experience with the students majoring in Drama Theater Acting suggests this is especially valuable in modern reality where neglected speech in the social environment and modern technologies adversely affect speech culture and interpretations of verbal action. The acquired experience from the defended master’s degree is reflected not only in the practical work but also in Dr. Mechkarski’s monograph. The concepts in the “Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech” that are basic for the stage speech, are complemented and enriched with some fundamental characteristics of terms from the field of the science of Speech Therapy. I consider this a contribution that enriches the technological principles of teaching in Correct Speech and Stage Speech.

Dr. Todor Mechkarski pointed out the necessity of “uniting the scientific terms, their aspects, definitions and etymology” as the main purpose and argument in the motivation for writing his work. In confirmation of my positive assessment stated in the beginning of this short review, I consider it necessary to highlight two of the major contributions of the monograph, in terms of their significance:

1. The habilitation work is the only theoretical text in the form of a dictionary in the field of stage speech.
2. The habilitation work provides information on the interdisciplinary connections and dependence of the terms of stage speech with the sciences of speech therapy, logotherapy, phonetics and linguistics.

The qualities of “Terminological Fundamentals of Stage Speech” give me a definite reason to recommend to the scientific jury to award Dr. Todor Mechkarski with the academic position of “Associated Professor”.

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