

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kristiana Simeonova
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regarding the dissertation submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific
degree Doctor

in Professional Field 2.1. Philology, Doctoral Program Romance Languages (Italian),
Field of Higher Education 2. Humanities

Author: Evgeniya Kirilova Atanasova

Title of the Dissertation: Italian Loanwords in the Bulgarian Language

By Order of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” of 10 June 2025 (protocol No. 10), I was appointed as an external member of the Scientific Jury for the public defense of the dissertation of the independent doctoral candidate Evgeniya Kirilova Atanasova on the topic Italian Loanwords in the Bulgarian Language.

The dissertation is structured as follows: introduction, four chapters, conclusion, list of sources, bibliography, and appendix. In the introduction, the author substantiates the choice of the topic, formulates the aims and tasks of the research, outlines the applied approaches and methods, and defines the theoretical basis of the study. The topic is timely and of significant scholarly relevance, given the permanent and intensifying process of lexical borrowing in contemporary Bulgarian, in which Italian plays a noteworthy role. The objective of the study, as stated by the author, is to determine the place and role of Italian loanwords in modern Bulgarian and to analyze the process and degree of their lexical-semantic adaptation (p. 3). The corpus of analyzed lexical units is sufficiently representative to ensure reliability of the conclusions. The introduction also contains a comprehensive review of the relevant scholarly literature. The author demonstrates that no complete and systematic study of Italian loanwords in Bulgarian exists to date, which determines both the scientific contribution and the practical relevance of the dissertation.

Chapter One: Theoretical Basis of the Study

The author provides important terminological clarifications, reviewing the established terminology related to lexical borrowing and analyzing the diversity of approaches in Bulgarian and international scholarship. A notable strength is the consistent use of traditional, well-established terms (loanword, foreignism, internationalism, calque,

integration, adaptation), which ensures continuity and clarity in scholarly communication. The introduction of the term Italianism, defined as “lexemes, phrases, or constructions characteristic of Italian that have entered another language or dialect” (p. 17), represents an original contribution of the dissertation.

Chapter Two: Italian and Italianisms in Historical Perspective

The author traces the extralinguistic factors underlying the influence of Italian on other European languages and establishes that, apart from French and English, Italian has exerted the strongest lexical influence. The second part of the chapter examines the history and channels of penetration of Italianisms into Bulgarian. It is convincingly demonstrated that Italian loanwords form the earliest layer of Western European borrowings in Bulgarian, entering mainly through intermediary languages: Greek, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, and, more rarely, Romanian during the Middle Ages and Ottoman period; French, German, and Russian after the Liberation (p. 39).

Chapter Three: Types of Italian Loanwords

The author presents several classifications of Italianisms according to sphere of use, stylistic layer, and channels of borrowing, and also addresses their etymological specifics, including cases of etymological doublets of Italian origin.

Chapter Four: Semantic Adaptation of Italian Loanwords in Bulgarian

The author analyzes the semantics of the borrowed words in comparison with their Italian originals. Based on the degree of semantic equivalence, three main groups are distinguished: (1) monosemous words; (2) polysemous words (borrowed with one or with several meanings); (3) words developing new semantics in Bulgarian (either through semantic broadening or through acquisition of entirely new meanings). This semantic classification, supported by sufficient examples, is one of the major contributions of the dissertation.

Conclusion

The dissertation fully meets the requirements for a doctoral thesis. It demonstrates a solid theoretical foundation, thorough knowledge of the literature, and a high level of scholarly competence. The research possesses substantial scientific value and contributes to the study of lexical borrowing in Bulgarian. The main contributions are explicitly listed on p. 181 of the dissertation. The work is written in a clear, precise, and accessible style, which further enhances its academic merit.

The abstract corresponds fully to the content of the dissertation and accurately reflects its contributions.

In view of the above, I propose with full conviction that the esteemed Scientific Jury confer upon Evgeniya Kirilova Atanasova the educational and scientific degree Doctor.

18 August 2025

Prepared by:

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