

## STATEMENT

**for participation in a competition for appointment  
to an Associate Professor's academic position in  
professional field: 2.1. Philology (Slavic Languages: Czech Language)  
requested by St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia (Sofia University – SU),  
Faculty of Slavic Studies (FSS),  
as advertised in the State Gazette No. 93 of November 26, 2019,  
and on the FSS and SU Internet sites**

The statement has been prepared by **Assoc. Professor Krasimira Angelova Chakarova, PhD, from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**, in her capacity as member of the scientific jury for the competition pursuant to Order No RD 38-2/09 Jan. 2020 issued by the Rector of Sofia University.

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the competition advertised, i.e. **Head Asst. Prof. Stiliyan Ivanov Stoychev, PhD, from St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia**.

### **I. General description of the materials presented**

#### **1. Information on the materials submitted**

The set of materials submitted by the candidate in paper and electronic form is compliant with the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the *Regulations* relating to the Conditions and Order for obtaining *Scientific Degrees* and occupying *Academic Positions* at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. All necessary documents are available in their textual completeness. Dr S. Stoychev's scientific research can be quantitatively presented as follows: the list of publications comprises 63 titles (see 07.1. *List of all publications*), 35 of them as single author papers (2 monographs, 1 PhD thesis, 1 summary of a PhD thesis, 2 textbooks, 1 research paper, 21 articles, 7 reviews), and 28 in co-authorship (textbooks and manuals, dictionaries, etc.). The candidate participates in the competition for appointment to an Associate Professor's position with a package of 16 publications published between 1989 – 2019: 2 monographs and 14 articles (one of them in a refereed journal).

#### **2. Data on the candidate**

Head Asst. Prof. Stiliyan Stoychev was born on 24 July 1958. In 1984, he graduates from the *Czech Language and Literature* and *General Linguistics* programmes of Charles University in Prague (the Czech Republic). In 1985, he was appointed Assistant Professor at the Department of Slavic Linguistics of the Faculty of Slavic Studies in St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, and in 1991 he was promoted to a Head Assistant Professor's position. From 1988 to 1991, he was a Bulgarian Language lecturer in the Belarusian State University in Minsk (Belarus). He worked as a part-time Czech language teacher for a number of educational and cultural institutions: 142<sup>nd</sup> Secondary School Veselin Hanchev in Sofia, Neofit Rilski South-western University in Blagoevgrad, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, the New Bulgarian University, the Language Training Department at St. Kliment Ohridki University of Sofia, and the Czech Cultural Centre in Sofia. He was awarded a PhD degree in Philology in 2014 having defended his doctoral thesis entitled *The Modern Bulgarian Statal Perfect and Its Functional Equivalents in the Modern Czech Language*. He has been a member of the Bohemia Club Academic Association since its foundation in 1993. He knows Czech, Slovak, Russian and English.

#### **3. General characteristics of the candidate's scientific works and achievements**

Having become acquainted with Dr Stiliyan Stoychev's scientific output, I am convinced that he is an author who approaches the linguistic material with precision and thoroughness. His publications are distinguished by their heuristic nature and expression of their author's own position on a number of contentious issues in modern linguistics.

The candidate's work is focused on the area of Bulgarian-Czech morphology, but he also has interesting studies related to comparative phraseology and functional-semantic grammar.

The candidate participates in this Associate Professor's competition with his monograph *The Bulgarian Relative and the Czech Language or on the Modern Bulgarian Morphological Relative and Its Functional Equivalents in the Modern Czech Language* (Sofia: Stiluet Publishing House, 2019, 402 pages). The marked grammeme *relative (dependent taxis)* within the Bulgarian morphological category of *taxis* and the functional equivalents of the *relative* in Modern Bulgarian and Modern Czech are the objects of scientific description. The observations are based on a solid taxonomic corpus, which makes the final conclusions convincing. I accept unreservedly the author's opinion (see 11. *Information on the original scientific contributions*) that this is the first "systemic synchronous contrastive study of relativity in both compared languages" in Bulgarian and Bohemian studies that is based on the method of establishing a foreign language and language-internal functional equivalence. In my opinion, a serious theoretical contribution of the habilitation research is the fact that the relative has been interpreted within the context of all other marked meanings of the Bulgarian verb and has been clearly distinguished from temporality. The author's familiarity with the relevant literature is impressive, and the most recent publications related to individual aspects of the problem investigated have been included.

Some innovative decisions in the presentation of verb categories in modern Bulgarian are of particular interest to me as a Bulgarian language researcher. One example is the idea of outlining the three-member morphological category (MC) "action evidence" "with an unmarked member the "non-evidential" grammeme (including the non-praeterial grammemes – *note mine*, K.Ch.), which is evidentially indifferent, and two grammemes in equipollent contrast – witness evidential [...] and distant evidential [...] (Stoychev 2019: 203). Undoubtedly, the author puts forward a non-standard and interesting solution to the problem of grammaticalised evidentiality in the Bulgarian verb paradigm. In it (unlike V. Marovska's three-member *taxis* category model), the aorist forms, some of them marked by the -x- morpheme, are also included. The analysis is impressive with its depth, multifaceted character and insight although some of the concepts give rise to controversies. Firstly, I would like to point at the tautologic term "witness evidential" chosen as the oppositional correlate to the so-called "distant evidential". Practically, the distant evidential includes the forms defined as conclusive (subjective-modal, i.e. marked within the morphological category of *mood*) by I. Kutsarov. St. Stoychev does not offer any additional arguments for the exclusion of the conclusive from the mood system and the assignment of its forms to the "action evidence" category but rather accepts V. Marovska's opinion on the "possibility for the conclusive to have imperative and conditional modal forms", i.e. in violation of A. I. Smirnitski's principle (Marovska, cited in Stoychev 2019: 225). As I have already pointed out on some occasions, the examples of distant relativity (conclusive-imperative, conclusive-conditional, etc.) of the type *нека да е пиел!, дано да е пиел!, пийвал е*, and others, provided by V. Marovska in her monograph, are questionable since their existence has not been certified by authentic illustrative material; rather, constructed sentences of often dubious semantics are used.

Another confusing issue arises from the fact that in defining the semantics of the new verb category, St. Stoychev practically duplicates the definition of the mood category: "the relation of the enunciative subject to the action and its result" (Stoychev, *ibid.*: 203). Does that mean that the "action evidence" is the semantic analogue to mood? Also, the author's view of the idea, popular in our science, of evidentiality as a category expressing the speaker's attitude to the veracity of the utterance remains unclear.

Here, I need to emphasise that St. Stoychev's innovative approach to the interpretation of verb categories in modern Bulgarian along with the impressive thorough analysis of the grammaticalised *taxis* deserve admirations regardless of my disagreement with some individual ideas in principle. Still, we should not forget that it is not seldom that conceptual "divergences" result from a difference in methodological strategies and/or theoretical and conceptual paradigms. St. Stoychev's second monograph (*The Bulgarian Morphological Resultative and the Czech Language or on the Modern Bulgarian Morphological Relative and Its Functional Equivalents in the Modern Czech Language*) was published on the basis of his PhD thesis. It is the first functional-

semantic description of the resultativity field in the two Slavic languages, Bulgarian and Czech. Whereas this field has a clearly defined core in Bulgarian, i.e. the morphological category *aspect of verbs*, in the Czech language, there is a polycentric field having the morphosyntactic category *resultative state* as its basic micro-core. The analysis of the functional equivalents of the Bulgarian resultative forms in the Czech language has been made with impressive thoroughness and sagacity, demonstrating a fine perception of linguistic details. It is only natural that this publication as well as the author's habilitation research were welcomed with huge interest by Slavic studies specialists, which is evident from the considerable number of reviews (8 in total) published in Bulgaria and abroad.

A contrastive perspective has also been adopted in a large part of the candidate's other publications (articles and research papers). Most of them have been dedicated to interesting and topical subjects within the area of morphology: *The Bulgarian Resultative Future and its Czech Functional Equivalents*; *On the Bulgarian Relative Resultative Future and Its Bulgarian and Czech Equivalents*; *On the Syncretism in the Paradigm of the Bulgarian Verb and the Bulgarian-Czech Language Asymmetry*; *On the Reflexes of the Perfect in Modern Bulgarian and Their Functional Equivalents in the Modern Czech Language*; *Temporal Relativity in the Context of the Past in Bulgarian and Czech*; etc. In all of them, the focus of scientific analysis has been directed towards insufficiently studied linguistic phenomena whose clarification is of both theoretical significance and practical value in translation practice.

St. Stoychev's studies in the area of phraseology (*Monocollocable Words as Phraseme Components in Bulgarian and Czech* (article and research paper); *Lexical Idioms*) also merit attention. The first two focus on the interesting phenomenon of *monocollocability* (extremely limited collocability) in the lexical systems of the two compared languages. The lists of Bulgarian and Czech phraseological units including a monocollocable word that are appended to the research paper are useful from the point of view of language practice.

There is also significant contribution in the article *The Ideas of Prague Structuralism in the Works of Prof. A. V. Bondarko and Prof. Iv. Kutsarov* refereed in the Web of Science. In it, the author draws a conclusion that the Prague School was one of the first structuralist linguistic schools and had considerable impact on the creation and development of functional grammar in the form encountered in the works of A. V. Bondarko and Iv. Kutsarov. This relates mainly to R. Jakobson's concept of *binarism* (the so-called *markedness theory*, to the functional approach to linguistic phenomena developed by Prague structuralists, their ideas of centre and periphery in language, etc.

#### **4. Characteristics and evaluation of the candidate's teaching experience**

Dr Stiliyan Stoychev is currently a full-time lecturer at the Department of Slavic Linguistics, Faculty of Slavic Studies in Sofia University. During his over 30-year employment at the higher school, he has provided training mainly to Czech Language and Literature Master's programme students. He gives lectures in Modern Czech Language: Phonetics and Phonology, Modern Czech Language: Morphology, Communicative Skills in Czech: part 1, and conducts seminars in Morphology of the Czech Language, Practical Czech Language (Parts 1 – 4), and Czech Spelling and Orthoepy. The manner of his communication with the students and his ability to motivate them for active participation in the training process are impressive.

Head Asst. Prof. St. Stoychev has also contributed greatly to the improvement of the methodology of teaching Czech as a foreign language. He is the author of *Czech Language Textbook for Beginners* (1998) (published in two separate parts), and he has also participated in the authorship of 4 textbooks and 25 manuals with Bohemian subject matter and marked resonance in the academic community. He is also a co-author of the remarkable lexicographic accomplishment that is the *Czech-Bulgarian Dictionary in Two Volumes* (edited by Prof. Svetomir Ivanchev) (2002), and of *LANGUAGE IN TOURISM. BG. A Multi-Lingual Dictionary for Tourism* (2008), both of them highly appreciated by Czech language specialists: teachers, translators, etc.

#### **5. Content analysis of the candidate's scientific and applied achievements contained in the materials for participation in the competition**

As has already been pointed out, the contribution of the scientific output of Head Asst. Prof. Stiliyan Stoychev, PhD is indisputable both theoretically and from a practical and applied viewpoint. The majority of scholars in Slavic studies are well acquainted with his works. This is demonstrated by the information on the citations of his research, which specifies 45 citations by Bulgarian and foreign linguists (13 citations of his single-author publications and 32 of co-authored works). It needs mentioning that two of the citations are in the Web of Science, five in CEEOL, one in Google Science, and one in JSTOR.

#### **6. Critical comments and recommendations**

With the exception of the above objections regarding certain standpoints in the candidate's research, I could say that I have no significant critical comments to make in relation to the content of the materials presented by the candidate. I believe he was precise and objective in the description of the contributions and merits of his habilitation research and of the rest of the publications that he submitted for participation in the competition. I would recommend that the author direct his efforts to more publications in refereed journals in order to gain greater visibility and popularity of his scientific achievements.

#### **7. Personal impressions of the candidate**

My personal impressions of the candidate arise out of our participations in different scientific events. I admire the way in which he presents his ideas, his remarkable linguistic erudition, his ability to debate tactfully, showing respect to his opponents. I believe Dr Stoychev is not only a talented researcher who considers linguistic science his vocation but also a friendly, responsible and ethical person.

#### **8. Conclusion on the candidacy**

The analysis of the materials and original scientific works submitted by Head Asst. Prof. Stiliyan Stoychev, PhD for participation in the competition which contain indisputable theoretical and applied contributions gives me sufficient reasons to conclude that the candidate's achievements are compliant with the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations on its application and the respective Regulations of St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia concerning the appointment to an Associate Professor's academic position.

## **II. GENERAL CONCLUSION**

In view of the qualities of the scientific production submitted as well as the candidate's scientific and academic qualification and successful activities, I unreservedly recommend that the scientific jury award Head Asst. Prof. Stiliyan Ivanov Stoychev, PhD appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in scientific area 2. Humanities, field 2.1. Philology (Slavic Languages – Czech Language).

7 April 2020

Plovdiv

Statement prepared by:

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