

## OPINION

for a competition procedure for the academic position “associate professor” in the field of higher education 2.1. Philology (Grammar and Historical Linguistics – English Language), announced in State Gazette No 87 from 19.10.2021 for the needs of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Department of English and American Studies

One candidacy has been submitted to the competition, namely that of Senior Lecturer Bozhil Petrov Hristov, PhD, who is a staff member at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

After a procedure for checking the candidate’s eligibility, by decision of the respective faculty committee, he was admitted for participation in the competition.

1. Data analyzed in relation to the compliance of the application with the minimum and additional requirements for the academic position “associate professor”.

The candidate in the procedure, senior lecturer Dr. Hristov has submitted all required documents certifying the compliance of his application with the requirements of the Law about Scientific Degrees and Titles, as well as the Rules of Procedures of the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The submitted documents confirm the correctness of the aggregated indicators of the scientific data for the research, teaching and expert work of senior lecturer Dr. Hristov, which correspond fully to the minimum national requirements under bl. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the ODARB, as well as to the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

2. Presentation of the candidate

As can be seen from the candidate’s documentation, presented for the procedure, senior lecturer Dr. Bozhil Petrov Hristov has a rich academic and professional career, which can be defined as a process of a continuous educational and training development and upgrading beginning with his school education through the BA and MA programmes in the field of English and American studies, as well as a process of connecting his academic career with the practice of teaching English linguistics, more specifically historical linguistics to university students not only in Bulgaria, but abroad as well. The candidate’s professional development is due to his participation in various trainings, internships, study visits of a different duration, thematic orientation, etc. His academic career started back in 2008 after a 4-year-full time PhD study (2008-2012) at Oxford University, Great Britain, then in 2012 he got his PhD degree in General Linguistics and Comparative

Philology, and his professional one in 2011, when he started work as a part-time assistant professor in the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University, and since 2014 he has been a senior lecturer in English, English Grammar and English Historical Linguistics, so for a period of about 20 years or so he succeeded going through all those stages of his career development.

Dr. Hristov has got classes with BA English Studies students at Sofia University, namely practical English/ general and academic English, English grammar (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> part), morphology, historical linguistics, history of the English language, as well as some other BA courses, such as old- and middle English texts analysis (optional/ elective), MA course principles of linguistic analysis (compulsory in the MA programme *Language and Culture*). Apart from that, in 2008-2011 he had classes in morphosyntax, pragmatics and historical linguistics, tutorials in English grammar; lectures in historical linguistics and methods for conducting linguistic research at the Faculty of Linguistics, Oxford University, Oxford, Great Britain. His other professional duties during that period included checking candidate students' admission tests and participation in oral communication with candidate students, as well as checking exam papers in grammar. As can be seen, some of the conducted courses are directly related to the topic of the current procedure.

During the years he has undergone different qualification courses as is the case with the students' exchange programme of Socrates/Erasmus at the Department of English Language and Linguistics (Chaucer, late modern English, semantics and pragmatics) at Sheffield University, Sheffield, Great Britain, in 2005-2006. In 2008-2009 he took part in a PhD course in linguistics at University College London, London, Great Britain. Bozhil Hristov has been awarded a great number of scholarships and awards from different institutions and universities, enumerated in his CV, one of which in 2018 from the Fulbright Commission for research and teaching at the Department of Linguistics, Texas University, Austin, USA.

Dr. Hristov has participated in a number of international, national and university projects, listed in his documentation of the application procedure.

As a lecturer he has had classes in a number of foreign universities under the Erasmus+ programme in Salamanca, Spain, Roehampton University, London, Great Britain; he has had presentations as a guest lecturer at Austin University, Texas, USA, Cologne University, Germany, and as a participant in a number of international conferences in Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong and many others.

The candidate's academic interests are in the field of comparative linguistics, grammar (morphology, syntax, typology), historical linguistics, description of the structure and the historical development of English and Bulgarian.

From the documentation it becomes obvious that there is sufficient proof of the fulfilment of the minimum and additional requirements for the academic position "associate professor". The candidate's research, qualification and publication activities are really impressive with their wide academic basis integrating various linguistic theories, paradigms and models with their practical application.

The total number of his publications (17) is broken down into: after he was awarded his PhD degree and according to the requirements of the procedure – 24: 1 monograph (App. 2); 1 published PhD thesis (App. 3); book chapters – 2 (App. 7 – 1, 2); in academic journals, refereed in Scopus and Web of Science – 2 (App. 5 – 1, 2); in books of proceedings with academic reviews or in refereed collected papers: international (App. 4 – 3); in refereed national academic journals (App. 4, 6 – 4) and in books of collected papers from conferences and annual editions: international (App. 4 - 3). He has a total of 9 publications cited in 24 academic sources, as follows: 3 publications cited in 6 books of proceedings and periodicals refereed in Scopus and 6 publications cited in 18 non-refereed sources with academic reviews. All citations can be found in Google Scholar.

Bozhil Hristov's organizational activity is of a various nature, connected with the conducting of national and international conferences and forums, enumerated in his application materials.

Dr. Bozhil Hristov's habilitation work *Grammaticalising the Perfect and Explanations of Language Change: Have- and Be-Perfects in the History and Structure of English and Bulgarian* corresponds to the topic of the competition. It contains various and up-to-date sources in the reference section and is a significant contribution in the area of linguistic research, more specifically in the field of historical linguistics. Besides, the investigation is carried out from a comparative standpoint which makes it quite valuable from the perspective of the similarities and differences in the aspects of the two verbal systems by using a unified approach. The aim of the habilitation work is to present the various researchers' views on the discussed issue and to make a survey of the evolution models of linguistic change in the context of grammaticalisation (Ch. 2). In chapters 3 and 4 an emphasis is put on the history of the perfects in (Old) English with the auxiliaries "be" and "have" and the gradual disappearance of "be" as a full-bodied member for forming the perfect with intransitive verbs of change of place or state. In Chapter 7 quite logically

the perfect is discussed in the history and the grammatical structure of Bulgarian, as a number of the details such as the ones about Macedonian are absolutely unnecessary. Chapter 8 examines the perfect in a selection of medieval and early modern Bulgarian texts. In Chapter 9 on the basis of the analyses and summaries, conclusions from a historical perspective are made about the perfect in both languages oriented toward the grammaticalisation of “be” and “have”. The book also discusses the appearance of a new form for the perfect with “get”, as well as the existence of zero endings in Old English in comparison with Bulgarian, accompanied with concrete linguistic materials.

The book shows the candidate’s knowledgeability when applying quite successfully the mentioned linguists’ viewpoints in his analysis. The information is quite detailed and exhaustive.

#### Recommendations:

I find the comparison of the historical processes in English with the ones in German quite unnecessary.

The monograph can serve as a material for an elective, oriented towards the historical changes of the structures of the perfects with “have” and “be” in both languages, accompanied by analyses of appropriate samples.

As regards his other publications after his PhD degree, they are as follows: a book with exemplary admission tests for English Studies’ candidate students for Sofia University as part of authors’ team, having no reference to the topic of the competition; the monograph is directly related to one part of the topic (historical linguistics), as well as 1 more publication in co-authorship, while the rest of the publications dwell on various issues in the field of the English and/ or Bulgarian grammar, some of them on a comparative basis. Apart from that, Dr. Hristov is a part of editorial boards of books of proceedings; his reviews of other researchers’ publications are published in academic journals.

#### 3. Assessment of the applicant’s quality of his scientific productivity and contributions

The documents presented by the candidate for the procedure on the scientific and applied contributions highlight the most important conceptual and applied aspects of the innovation of his scientific endeavours. What I would like to add is the fact that I appreciate highly senior lecturer Dr. Hristov’s efforts to explore in depth and adequately apply the existing theoretical prerequisites

in the field of linguistics as a whole, comparative research, the historical development of language and of more specific grammatical phenomena in English and Bulgarian, which is undoubtedly a contribution to the more general linguistics as well as to its more concrete manifestations. The studied grammatical issues are also applied in the teaching of English not only in Bulgaria, but also at some renowned foreign universities. The review of the scientific production and academic work of Dr. Bozhil Hristov's gives me strong reasons to declare that his candidacy fully meets the requirements for the scientific position of an associate professor.

#### 4. Conclusion

Taking into account both the quantitative scientific minimum requirements for the academic position of associate professor, as well as the qualitative analysis of senior lecturer Dr. Bozhil Petrov Hristov's scientific production, work and contributions, I strongly support his candidacy in this procedure and give my positive assessment about his scientific and applied achievements, as his academic and professional orientation in the field of philological sciences fulfil the requirements of the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and its accompanying regulations. I recommend to the Academic Selection Committee to vote positively for awarding the **academic rank of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR to Senior Lecturer Dr. Bozhil Petrov Hristov in the area of: 2. Humanities, professional field, 2.1. Philology (Grammar and Historical Linguistics – English Language), for the needs of the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".**

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Signature:

(prof. Romyana Todorova, PhD)

