

## OPINION

about competition for occupation of academic position “associate professor” in professional area 2.1. “Philology”, scholarly speciality (“Bulgarian language – Sociolinguistics”), announced in the State Gazette, issue 74 of August 2020, with applicant: Chief Assistant Dr. Danka Apostolova Bayryamova-Atanasova

Reviewer: Dr. Luchia Stefanova Antonova-Vasileva – Prof. at the Section for Bulgarian Dialectology and Linguistic Geography at the Institute for Bulgarian Language at BAS

Danka Bayryamova-Atanasova completed the speciality “Bulgarian Linguistics” in 1984 at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. She defended a dissertation and acquired educational and scholarly degree “doctor” in 2001. Since 1986 she has been a lecturer at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” – Department of Language Teaching, Chair of *Bulgarian Language and Specialized Teaching for Foreigners*, where at present she is a Chief Assistant. In the period 1994-1995 she taught at the University of Salzburg, Austria, and in the period 2006-2008 – at the Saarland University, Germany. Besides her activities as a lecturer, D. Bayryamova-Atanasova was a manager of 7 international projects. The information about the meeting of the minimum national requirements shows that her scholarly work may be assessed at 595 points, which exceeds the requirements for acquisition of the academic position “associate professor”.

For participation in the competition, D. Bayryamova-Atanasova submits works in the field of sociolinguistics, dialectology, problems of language attitudes during learning of foreign languages and during learning of Bulgarian language as a foreign one. In her publications, the application of the latest theoretical formulations and modern research methods is obvious.

The monographic habilitation work *The Burgas Language of Migrants from East Strandzha*, issued in 2020, is dedicated to the sociolinguistic study. It presents a study of the sociodemographic and situationally determined parameters of the change in the speech and speech behaviour, performed at high professional level after clearly formulated criteria for the language peculiarities, in conformity with the formulations of leading linguists about structural language features (cf. Labov and many others), in which most modern statistical methods are also applied. The variation of the initial dialect features and their literary and/or urban correspondences, the correlations between the initial dialect features according to the signs *stability – instability*, the manifestations of the interaction between the two types of independent variables – sociodemographic and situational, are examined. The demographic-social profile of the East Strandzha migrant language community in Burgas is described. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the results of the studies and the self-evaluation of the respondents with respect to the factors influencing the change in their speech behaviour as well as to their language attitudes related to the attitude towards the own vernacular, the urban vernacular in Burgas and the literary language. On the basis of original field material and personal observations on the population from the initial substrate – the East Strandzha (Malko Tarnovo/Hasekiya) vernacular, the classifying features of the dialect, in which it differs from the urban vernacular of the inhabitants of Burgas of other place of origin in the mixed urban language macrocommunity are accentuated and analyzed. Emphasis is placed on the characterological peculiarities of the phonetic system of the vernacular; the historical development of the vocal system of the dialect as well as its characteristic morphological peculiarities are presented. Among the studied 11 sociolinguistic variables, one is determined as newly adopted in Burgas environment – the sub-Balkan ending for present tense, 1<sup>st</sup> person, singular of verbs of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation in accented position – -à, ’-à -ùà, instead of the literary [-v], [’-v], [-ÿv]. For features (supra)regional in terms of areal spread, among which the spread of the use of the variants жc’ instead of the literary джc

– a characterological initial dialect feature with non-narrow localization at areal level, are also described. The effect of the factors gender, age and education on the differences in the speech is studied statistically. In connection with the studies in this aspect, I would like to share my impressions that the assertion that, *with more elderly people*, the attitude towards *stronger speech self-control in order to avoid non-literary deviations emerging in their mind, but more difficult to overcome*, manifests itself more systematically, in fact applies to the people from the active creative age. As regards the most elderly people who are more restricted in their social contacts, with them, the peculiarities of the dialect from childhood manifest themselves almost without inhibitions, on account of which exactly they are traditionally most sought by the informing dialectologists.

In the dialectological studies of D. Apostolova, important are those dedicated to the historical development of the sound systems of the end south-western vernaculars in the Republic of Bulgaria – of the vowel system in the Malko Tarnovo (Hasekiya) vernacular in East Strandzha.

In a study on this subject, she applies diachronic approach, she makes a comparison to the Old-Bulgarian condition, according to the forms registered in the classical Old-Bulgarian records – cf. also the publications: *To the characterization of the south-east Bulgarian vowel system. The vowel system of the Fakiya vernacular in West Strandzha; The consonant systems of the two ancient vernaculars in Strandzha; Characterological peculiarities of the consonant system of the end south-east vernaculars in the Republic of Bulgaria*, etc. In those papers, the consonant systems of the Malko Tarnovo/Hasekiya vernacular in East Strandzha and the Fakiya vernacular in West Strandzha are examined for the first time. It is concluded that the two dialects keep their independent appearance until today, irrespective of their centuries-old co-existence in the immediate territorial proximity. In doing so, the unity of the ancient south Bulgarian (Rup) language belt, unlike the West Strandzha (Fakiya) vernacular, is emphasized. Through some of their common features, the two main Strandzha vernaculars related to the old population in the area, differ clearly from the mixed Zagore vernaculars of the relatively later established population (the so called inhabitants of Zagore) in the northern sides of Strandzha and to the west of it.

Besides studies of the folk vernaculars in sociolinguistic and in diachronic aspect, D. Apostolova Bayryamova also works on studies of the mutual interference between Bulgarian and German language in the case of students. She applies sociolinguistic aspect of investigation in the study *Some opinions of the salience in English language*. This aspect of investigation is also applied to dialect material in the paper *Salience of dialect features in new language environment*, where characterological dialect features in the field of the consonant system in the urban vernacular of first-generation migrants from East Strandzha, living for a long time in Burgas, are studied. The same also applies to the paper *One linguistic variable in the Burgas urban language situation*, in which the use of the non-literary sub-Balkan verb ending [-à] for the 1<sup>st</sup> person, singular, present tense and its variation with the literary [-v̂] in *Burgas “language”* is examined. The reason for its adoption is sought in the fact that this peculiarity is not perceived as non-prestigious. To this paper, I would like to put the question as to if the literary spelling of the verb endings is not an additional factor in the adoption of this dialect peculiarity. Also, I would like to express my opinion that the use of the term “language” in the cases in which the vernacular of a given settlement, including a city/town, is described, creates possibility for diverse interpretations. In my opinion, it is better to avoid it. The term “language” is not exact in such cases, which is also obvious from the fact that, in the monographic work, the collocation “Burgas language” is used, but not “Strandzha language”, as far as I could study, and in other papers, “urban language” is used, but not “rural language”, and the like. Otherwise, D. Apostolova correctly examines, in terms of sociolinguistics, the characterological dialect peculiarities as specific markers of speech. Some of them she defines as unique for the

Bulgarian language – cf. East Strandzha prolonged soft consonants *к', г', х', н', л'*. In a number of publications, the phonetic interferences between the East Strandzha dialect and the Burgas urban vernacular have been also analyzed – cf. *The fate of one East Strandzha mutation in the Burgas urban vernacular; On the limits of the phonetic interference; One aspect of diglossia in the Burgas urban language situation; Dialect periphery – area of diglossia.*

Besides those studies, D. Apostolova also presents investigations on the problems of acquisition of Bulgarian language by German-speaking people. These are pilot investigations on the attitudes in the study of Bulgarian language, proving the need of application of a *bilingual contrastive approach* for the purposes of the efficient study and teaching of the foreign language.

It may be summarized that, in the works of D. Apostolova, important contributions in the field of the sociolinguistic investigations which throw light on the modern speech processes in the Burgas language situation are made. It, as well as the language situations in the other big east Bulgarian cities, has not been studied so far. D. Apostolova makes for the first time investigation on the migrant language community in a big east Bulgarian city according to the modern demographic criteria. Her observations of the development of the migrant and mixed vernaculars in terms of dialectology and diachrony are also important. Her sociolinguistic investigations on the attitudes in the study of German language by Bulgarians and of Bulgarian language as a foreign language are also original. On the basis of the review of the contributions in the works by D. Apostolova, I would like to emphasize that I confidently propose to award to Danka Apostolova Bayryamova-Atanasova the academic position “assistant professor”.

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Sofia

Opinion prepared by:  
(Prof. Dr. Luchia Antonova-Vasileva  
– Institute for Bulgarian Language at BAS)