

OPINION

By professor Dr. Sc. Angel G. Angelov, teacher at the University of Sofia “Saint Kliment Ohridski”

About the academic and scientific activities of chief assistant professor doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova, concerning her application in the competition for the academic position “associate professor” in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian language – sociolinguistics), announced by the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” in the State Gazette, issue 74 of 21.08.2020.

According to the Order № RD-38-511/22.10.2020 of the Rector of the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” I participate in the scientific jury as an internal member in the competition for the academic position “associate professor” with the only candidate chief assistant professor doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova. The scientific jury, at its first meeting on 05.11. 2020, gave me a nomination to write an opinion.

Chief assistant professor Doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova was born in 1959. She graduated at the German language gymnasium in the city of Burgas in 1978. Then she graduated with a Master degree from the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” in 1984. In 2001 she defended a doctoral degree – PhD, with the topic of dissertation “The Fakian dialect”. Assistant professor Doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova is a teacher with a long practice and experience – she has been a teacher at The Department of Foreign language education (former Institute for Foreign Students) since 1986. She has been affiliated to the Chair of Bulgarian language and specialized education for foreigners. During her practice as a teacher she specialized and worked in various countries – Germany, Austria, and Greece. She uses in a highest level German language, as well as Russian, English, Greek, and in a lower level Polish and Spanish. Her professional experience is well known among the colleagues working in the field of academic and scientific contacts, because she is familiar with the new trends and the actual standards for the foreign language education. A significant part of her experience was accumulated in a multicultural environment during her professional travels and especially as a lector of Bulgarian language and culture abroad.

The scientific production of Dr. Danka Apostolova is significant and responds completely to the academic requirements for “associate professor”. I could separate her production in two thematic fields: first, works in dialectology and sociolinguistics, and second, works on the theory and practice of foreign language teaching, some of them with both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic orientation.

Firstly, we have to place in our focus her habilitation “The Burgas Language of migrants, coming from East Standzha”. In my view, this is a prestigious completely new sociolinguistic study. Bulgarian school in sociolinguistics has significant amount of urban studies – the pioneers

were M. Videnov and B. Bajchev with their research on Veliko Turnovo, and this is the reason why Bulgarian school in sociolinguistics is frequently named Videnov's school. Danka Apostolova has always been part of this school and has taken significant role in the organization of our biannual conferences. There is a long list of sociolinguistic studies: on immigrants from Gevgely (Republic of North Macedonia) in Sofia, on immigrants from the so called Western outlands, on the urban speech of Smolyan, on the language and attitudes in Bulgarian family, on sociolinguistic aspects in Krivodol, Vidin area, Banat, Ukraine, etc.

This study of Burgas language situation combines the best achievements of the Bulgarian sociolinguistics and I find that it is a remarkable contribution. Until this research, the Eastern Bulgarian towns have not been object of studies, so, this is a new field, and this approach was passionately expected by the specialists. The scope of the research includes analyses and observations, as well as self-observations and self-evaluations about the language changes as an impact of the process of migration. Attitudes of the language users towards their native dialect, the urban speech in Burgas and the Standard Bulgarian are precisely demonstrated. Respondents originate from a mountain region known as Eastern Stranzha, an area near the Black Sea and the Southern part of the municipality of Burgas. In fact, they are migrants from the area named Hassekia, a nucleus of East-Strandzha dialect, which was described a hundred years ago by the famous dialectologist L. Miletich. The Third chapter of the study describes in a new way this dialect, named also "malkotarnovski". Fourth chapter uses sociolinguistic methods – quantitative research of sociolinguistic variables. A dozen of linguistic variables - 12, defined as dependent are co-related with other variables, coming from extra-linguistic factors – independent variables. One could discover some of these dependent variables – linguistic features in other Bulgarian sociolinguistic studies, but some of them are new, because we find them only in Burgas area and we could trace them in the history of the outgoing dialect. Results are visualized by diagrams, supported by examples from the corpora and additional proofs. A new methodological moment in this research is the combination between socio-demographic factors as gender, age and education with situational factors which requires a complex statistical approach, new instruments for presentation of a broader variability. So, diagram No 17 presents general results leading to deeper inferences. In fact, the complex relations between standard and non-standard language uses are well presented by the results *per se*, however, the inferences and theoretical modeling of sociolinguistic patterns could be continued and I hope that the author will do this in her next works. The other dialectological and sociolinguistic articles, presented for this competition, confirm the logic of the development of Dr. Apostolova as an outstanding sociolinguist.

Dr. Danka Apostolova has significant contributions in the field of foreign language teaching and its methods. I could emphasize papers like: "Bulgarian language from the view of German language speakers", "Contact language and the contrastive approach in the acquisition and teaching of foreign languages from the student's point of view", "Factors of orientation in the study of Bulgarian language in academic non-Bulgarian language", "Attitudes toward Cyrillic alphabet in the process of acquisition of Bulgarian as a foreign language", "Intra-linguistic

interference in the use of grammatical categories gender and number in the Bulgarian interlanguage of German speakers". In this line we could place a sequence of papers discovering interferences between German and Bulgarian in the process of foreign language acquisition. Analyses demonstrate that this interference affects various morphological and phonetic features. Part of these articles, analyses the so called academic bilingualism and provide proofs from cultural studies and social-psychology, e.g. social attitudes, which are important factor in foreign language teaching. Dr. Apostolova is deeply familiar with this scientific field which definitely is a result from her significant professional experience.

In conclusion:

I express my convinced opinion that chief assistant professor doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova has fulfilled the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". She works purposefully and conscientiously in the fields of sociolinguistics and foreign language teaching. Her papers are known and cited not only in Bulgaria, her habilitation is respectful.

I propose to the scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Department of Slavic Philology at the University of Sofia "Saint Kliment Ohridski" to elect chief assistant professor doctor Danka Apostolova Bairjamova-Atanassova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian language – sociolinguistics).

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