

## Opinion

By Prof. Stefka Valkova Petrova

regarding

Danka Apostolova Bayryamova-Atanasova

There is one candidate for participation in the announced contest - Danka Apostolova. She has submitted all the necessary documents in the required format and content according to the Higher Education Act and the scientific degrees and titles.

The candidate has submitted 24 titles for the contest - one habilitation paper on the language of the migrants from East Strandzha in Burgas, five studies and 18 articles. The list of all publications includes 40 titles.

### **I. Brief biographical data**

The candidate graduated from the German Language High School in Burgas, followed by Bulgarian Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "(1984) and German language and literature at Sofia University (postgraduate qualification in 2003-2004). She has been working in the Institute for International Students (Department for Language Teaching) since 1986.

### **II. Characteristics of scientific and applied research output of the candidate**

The topics of research are mainly in two areas: Dialectology (sociolinguistics) and attitudes towards studying the Bulgarian language among foreigners (German-speakers).

#### **1. Dialectology (sociolinguistics)**

- a) The main and most significant work here is the habilitation study "Burgas language of migrants from East Strandzha", Sofia, EU print 2020, 283 pages. It consists of five chapters, bibliography, appendices (questionnaire, samples of idiolects - in informal and formal communication, divided into informants men and women). This is the first sociolinguistic study regarding the language situation in Burgas. The results are based on a framework of the transcribed speech of the idiolects of 11 informants (p. 10) and

the information gathered through an anonymous survey of 12 respondents (p. 11). The informants are "representatives of the first generation of immigrants in the regional town, born and raised in East Strandzha (therefore they have also acquired their initial linguistic and social experience in these settlements), who have now been living in Burgas for several decades" (p. 19). After a brief description of the respondents and interviewees - place of birth, education, professional realization - in the second part of Chapter Two the candidate focuses on their self-observations and self-assessments about changes in speech behaviour caused by their relocation to Burgas and their attitudes to their vernacular, urban speech and literary language- obtained from the questionnaires. Some other questions from the survey are also commented, such as how they talk to their parents, do they like their native dialect, etc. The general conclusion is that they cherish their native dialect.

In Chapter III, Apostolova examines the East Strandzha dialect in order to outline the matrix for comparison with the new language structures that have emerged in the language of the respondents. Without the knowledge of this substrate it is impossible to study the linguistic accommodation of the new society in Burgas. And Danka Apostolova is well acquainted with the Haseki / Malko Tarnovo dialect, as it is the topic of her doctoral dissertation. She has also researched into the already existing studies and research on this issue. With regard to the vocalism of speech, 10 cases were considered, and with regard to consonantism - the characterological softness of consonants in different positions. Accentological, morphological, some syntactic and lexical features of the speech are also considered and supported by bibliographic and personal observations.

In the fourth chapter we find the reasons for choosing the independent and dependent sociolinguistic variables and the frequency variation in each of them. One can see the profound knowledge of the facts - on the one hand, of the specific norms (literary and urban speech), and on the other - the speech of the citizens of Burgas, representatives of the first generation of migrants from the East Strandzhan dialect area. Here, in the frequency variation of the average values of the dependent sociolinguistic variables, as well as in the sociolinguistic analysis of the Burgas language of the migrants from East Strandzha (Chapter Five), the candidate has presented a diagram or graph for each phenomenon. This makes the book more readable and understandable for non-specialists. Presented are also the results of the one-factor and two-factor dispersion

analysis of the linguistic changes in the migratory East Strandzhan micro-community in Burgas.

The research methods and approaches of Danka Apostolova can be used to describe the urban language of migrants from another region to Burgas and other cities, which is one of the contributions of the study, along with the initial description of the language of these settlers.

I wanted to find a general assessment, a conclusion about the Burgas language of these settlers, expressed not on individual grounds, but as a summary for the general audience.

- b) On the same dialectological, sociolinguistic topic are also the presented 14 studies and articles, which consider an entire vernacular or urban dialect ("Faki dialect"; "General features of Strandzha dialects") or their individual characteristics ("Historical sound changes...Vocalism..."; "Towards the characteristics of ... "; "For some typical features..."; "Brightness 'salienie' of dialectal features..."; "The phoneme ê in one south-eastern Bulgarian dialect"; "The fate of one East Strandzhan umlaut..", etc.).

## **2. Attitudes towards studying the Bulgarian language among foreigners (German-speakers).**

The second topic refers to the foreign language training that the candidate has been doing since 1986, i.e. 34 years, and has gained enough knowledge and skills, especially with regards to German-speakers, as she was a lecturer for four years in Saarbrücken and Salzburg. There are 9 publications on this topic. I will discuss some of them.

- a) One of the issues on which there are four publications is about the attitudes towards the Bulgarian language. One of the articles studies the attitudes in terms of graphics, i.e. the Cyrillic alphabet. The candidate through a pilot quantitative study - a survey among the students at a German university found that the Cyrillic alphabet is perceived as an integral part of the process of learning the Bulgarian language and culture and does not cause much difficulty. Therefore the attitude towards the Cyrillic alphabet is predominantly positive ("Attitudes towards the Cyrillic alphabet in mastering the Bulgarian language as a foreign language"). Another article discusses the attitudes towards the study of Bulgarian as a foreign language - "Survey of attitudes towards the study of the Bulgarian Language by German speakers" (I would say "German speakers" or "German speakers" St. P.), - by analyzing the socio-demographic profile of the German-speaking students studying at the University of

Saarland (Saarbrücken); their foreign language experience and their attitude towards the study of foreign languages; motivational factors for the study of the Bulgarian Language. Regarding the attitudes towards contact language and the related contrastive approach, D. Apostolova found that more than half of the German universities prefer contact language when learning a new foreign language ("Contact language and the contrastive approach...").

- b) Another topic is the orientation factors in the choice of German speakers studying the Bulgarian Language as a foreign language. Focusing on the concepts of orientation and motivation, Apostolova points out that the presentation of the reasons for studying a foreign language (according to Dörnyei), divided into two types according to their orientation - instrumental and integrative - is too schematic and artificial, because they are not mutually exclusive. For the German-speakers studied by Apostolova is valid the overflowing integrative-instrumental character of the orientation ("Orientation factors in ...").
- c) c) Another subject is intralingual interference in the categories gender and number and native language interference in the use of noun categories in the intermediate language of German speakers, revealed in two publications.

### **III. Conclusion**

Considering that Danka Apostolova Bayryamova-Atanasova has enough publications that make significant contributions, she has published a number of materials abroad, she has enough citations, she speaks 4 languages fluently and 2 - well, that she is a doctor of philology, and she has many years of work experience in the Department for Language Teaching and International Students,

***I strongly recommend her*** to be awarded the scientific title of associate professor.

Written by:

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