

# OPINION

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by Assoc. Prof. Veska Kirilova Dimitrova, PhD,  
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on the dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree Doctor

in the field of Higher Education: 2. Humanities  
Professional field: 2.1. Philology  
Doctoral program: Romance Languages (Italian Language)

Author: Evgenia Kirilova Atanasova  
Title: Italian Loanwords in the Bulgarian Language

## **1. General Biographical Overview of the Candidate**

Doctoral candidate Evgenia Atanasova holds a Bachelor's degree in Italian Language and Literature with a teaching qualification from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," followed by a Master's degree in Translation and Editing from the same institution. These academic degrees provided her with solid theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as professional skills both as a secondary school teacher of Italian language and literature and as a translator-editor.

Her professional career began with teaching Italian at the National Educational Complex for Culture in Sofia (2009–2010). Since 2010 she has been employed as an Assistant Professor of Italian at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski."

## **2. Relevance of the Dissertation Topic**

The dissertation addresses a relevant and timely issue in Bulgarian lexicology by focusing on an insufficiently studied area—loanwords of Italian origin and their adaptation in the Bulgarian language. The scholarly interest stems from the necessity of a systematic and in-depth analysis of these lexical borrowings within the framework of contact linguistics between Bulgarian and Italian.

## **3. Structure and Content of the Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, bibliography, and appendix, with a total length of 197 pages. The bibliography includes over 90 sources in Bulgarian, Italian, Russian, German, English, and French.

This study represents a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Italian loanwords in

Bulgarian, examined from both diachronic and functional perspectives. It traces their historical development, fields of usage, and semantic transformations within the modern Bulgarian lexicon. Special attention is given to the channels of borrowing and the cultural-historical and sociolinguistic conditions that facilitated the influx of Italianisms.

The structure of the research is clearly outlined and logically consistent, covering the theoretical framework, historical background, classification of borrowings, and analysis of their semantic adaptation.

- Introduction – The introduction highlights the relevance of the study, clearly formulates the objectives and research tasks, and provides a thorough description of the corpus, methodology, and research approach.

- Chapter One – “Theoretical Framework of the Study” is divided into two sections. The first discusses terminology and classifications, elucidating the complex and multifaceted nature of lexical borrowing according to different scholarly perspectives. The second section analyzes the reasons, specific features, and significance of the borrowing process.

- Chapter Two – “The Italian Language and Italianisms in a Historical Perspective” investigates the spread of Italian loanwords across Europe and particularly into Bulgarian. It examines cultural, historical, political, and economic factors; identifies key sociocultural domains of borrowing; and highlights the importance of intermediary languages in different historical periods. A recent trend toward direct borrowing of Italianisms is also emphasized.

- Chapter Three – “Types of Italian Loanwords” provides a detailed classification based on communicative domains, stylistic registers, and pathways of adoption. Numerous examples illustrate the proposed typology. The author critically engages with conflicting etymological data across dictionaries, resolving certain discrepancies through a nuanced, multi-layered analysis. Attention is paid to etymological doublets, demonstrating scholarly precision and linguistic sensitivity.

- Chapter Four – “Semantic Adaptation of Italian Loanwords in Bulgarian” examines the semantic fate of loanwords in their process of integration. The author offers a typology based on semantic preservation, partial modification, or transformation. Main patterns of semantic behavior are identified, such as complete preservation, reduction, extension, derivation, divergence, and specialization. This typology provides a valuable tool for tracing the dynamics and evolution of Italianisms in Bulgarian.

The conclusion is well-structured and synthesizes the main findings and insights of the research.

#### **4. Theoretical and Practical Contributions. Abstract**

The dissertation offers both theoretical and applied contributions. It expands existing research in the field and opens new perspectives for further studies. Key contributions include:

- proposing a semantic typology of Italian loanwords according to the degree of preservation, partial assimilation, or semantic transformation;
- identifying and analyzing etymological doublets and conflicting lexicographic accounts;
- including new lexical units not yet fully covered in Bulgarian explanatory and etymological dictionaries.

The study has clear applied relevance for foreign language teaching, the development of educational resources in comparative lexicology, and cultural linguistics.

The abstract (46 pages) accurately reflects the content and findings of the dissertation.

#### **5. Publications Related to the Dissertation (Compliance with Scientometric Requirements)**

The doctoral candidate has produced four publications on the topic, two of which are already published and two forthcoming (with official confirmation provided).

1. Formation of the Main Domains of Use of Words of Italian Origin. // *Philological Forum* – 2024, no. 19, pp. 45–55. ISSN 2534-9473 (online).
2. I prestiti italiani nella lingua bulgara – alcuni casi interessanti dal punto di vista lessicografico. // *Philological Forum* – 2025, no. 21, pp. 103–113. ISSN 2534-9473 (online).
3. Etymological Issues Concerning Certain Italian Loanwords in Bulgarian. // *Proceedings of the XXI Conference of Junior Faculty and Doctoral Students, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology*. May 2024. (forthcoming).
4. Inadequate Loanwords of Italian Origin in Bulgarian. // *Proceedings of the Conference “Philology in the Contemporary World: Educational Perspectives, Scholarly Challenges, and Cultural-Historical Dimensions,” Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.”* 28.03.2025. (forthcoming).

#### **6. Personal Impressions, Notes, Recommendations, and Questions**

I have no personal impressions of the doctoral candidate Evgenia Atanasova.

#### **7. Conclusion**

The dissertation presents original scientific and applied results, meeting all requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its

Implementing Regulations, and the relevant regulations of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.”

The work demonstrates that Evgenia Atanasova possesses solid theoretical knowledge and professional competence in the field of Romance Languages (Italian), and that she is capable of conducting independent scholarly research.

For these reasons, I give a positive evaluation of the dissertation and recommend to the esteemed academic jury that Evgenia Atanasova be awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor in Higher Education Field: 2. Humanities, Professional Field: 2.1. Philology, Doctoral Program: Romance Languages (Italian).

Veliko Tarnovo, 02.09.2025

Prepared by:

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