

REVIEW

by **Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Georgieva Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, PhD**

Area of Higher Education: *1. Education Studies*, Professional Field: *1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching /English language/)*

Member of the Academic Jury appointed by Order № ПД-38-296 / 21.6.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

with regard to the selection procedure for the academic position of **PROFESSOR** in the Area of Higher Education: **2. Humanitarian Studies**, Professional Field **2.1. Philology (Phonetics and Phonology /English language/)** at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", announced in the *State Gazette*, issue 30 / 15.04.2022

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Snezhina Lyubozarova Dimitrova, PhD

The critical analysis of the documents and the supporting evidence, provided by associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova in her application for the academic position of PROFESSOR in the professional field of **2.1. Philology (Phonetics and Phonology /English language/)** at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology of Sofia University, clearly demonstrates her achievements on the way of her academic and professional development. Below I shall elaborate on those milestones of hers with which she meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of PROFESSOR under art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act* and the *Regulations* for its implementation at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

1. The Candidate

Assoc. Prof. Snezhina Dimitrova started working at Sofia University in 1991 (i.e. she has over 30 years of experience in her field of work) and during the years she has taught a wide array of theory- and practice-oriented courses, related to Phonetics and Phonology, both on the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the Department of English and American Studies (e.g. *Practical Phonetics*, *Phonology*, *Phonology of Discourse*, *English Intonation*, *Varieties of Spoken English*, *Applied Phonetics and Phonology*, *Introduction to English Pronunciation*, etc.). In 1999, she successfully defended her PhD thesis on *The rhythmic organisation of English and Bulgarian Speech: a comparative phonetic study* („Ритмична организация на английската и българската реч: съпоставително фонетично изследване“), on the basis of which some years later she published a book in English, entitled "In Search of Speech Rhythm in Bulgarian (in comparison with English)" [Polis Publishers, 2022, ISBN 978-954-796-094-7]. In 2007 she completed her habilitation work in the same professional field (*Germanic Languages, Modern*

English – Phonetics and Phonology), upon which she was promoted in rank and appointed to the position of Associate Professor at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology.

Along with her teaching responsibilities at the Department of English and American Studies, associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova supervises the work of some research students (incl. three PhD students who have successfully defended their dissertations in the field of English Phonetics and Phonology) and also coordinates and participates in a number of national and international educational and/or research projects, in which her Department or Sofia University are partner institutions (e.g. the project financed by the Science Research Fund of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science on the *Prosodic features of Bulgarian in comparison with other syllable-timed languages* /2019-2023/; the joint academic projects of her Department with the Phonetics group and the Department of Language Science and Technology of Universität des Saarlandes in Germany /2003 - present/, as well as with the Linguistics and English Language Department of the University of Edinburgh, UK /June-August 2009/; the internal departmental projects on *Developing a unified system of academic tests for the linguistic courses* /2012/ and *Ireland and Europe: Cultural and Literary Encounters* /2015/, etc.). In the period after her habilitation, associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova received a Fulbright Scholar grant to conduct post-doctoral research at the University of California, Los Angeles, USA (January-June 2013) and served on the technical committee and/or editorial board of a number of journals and international conference proceedings (e.g. the Proceedings of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences /ICPhS/ in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019; the International Conferences on Speech Prosody and Interspeech /2014-2022/, as well as the journal *PHONETICA* /2016/). Assoc. Prof. Snezhina Dimitrova's long-term membership in the *International Phonetic Association*, the *British Association of Academic Phoneticians* and the *Bulgarian Society for the Study of English* are also indicative of her commitment to the professional academic community in Bulgaria and abroad. Last but not least, she takes active part in the activities of the Academic Foundation for English and American Studies at Sofia University, and was a member of the Foundation Council between the years 2012 and 2018.

2. Assessment of the Candidate's Academic Research Publications

For the purposes of her application for the academic position of PROFESSOR in the professional field of 2.1. Philology (Phonetics and Phonology /English language/), associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova has submitted **one** published **monograph** in English – *Prosody in L2. Bulgarian-Accented English* (Polis Publishers, 2022, ISBN 978-954-796-096-1); **a book** based of her PhD dissertation, again written in English – *In Search of Speech Rhythm in Bulgarian (in comparison with English)* (Polis Publishers, 2022, ISBN 978-954-796-094-7); **two longer co-authored research studies** written in English [Andreeva, B., Dimitrova, S., Gabriel, Ch., Grünke, J. (2021). *Intonational convergence in Bulgarian Judeo-Spanish spontaneous speech* и Andreeva, B., Dimitrova, S. (2022) *Bulgarian Tones and Break Indices (BG_ToBI): a system for intonational annotation*], the first of which was published in a refereed collection of

articles, referenced in Scopus and Web of Science, while the second one was published in the Bulgarian journal *Philologia*; as well as **eleven articles** published in Bulgarian or foreign journals (3 in total) or collective volumes (8 in total)¹ after her habilitation (2007)², out of which 10 in English and 1 in Bulgarian, and 7 (out of the 11) written in collaboration with other colleagues of hers. It should be noted, however, that co-authorship of publications is strictly accounted for in the quantitative indices of her contribution reported in the Self-evaluation Statement of her fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the academic position of PROFESSOR under art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*. Here it should also be mentioned that the analysis of all the submitted by the candidate publications did not reveal any instances of plagiarism as defined in art. 4, para. 11 of the above mentioned Regulatory Act, and all of these publications are directly related to the research topic of the present selection procedure (namely *Phonetics and Phonology /English language/*).

The theory- and practice-oriented contributions of the candidate's academic publications can be defined in several intertwined scientific research areas within the broader topic of the present selection procedure, and very briefly, they are as follows: **intonation analysis** focusing on the intonation of standard Bulgarian and English (American English and RP English) using the Autosegmental-Metrical model of intonational phonology, along with the ToBI (Tones and Break Indices) analytical framework and dedicating special attention to Ineke Mennen's (2015) L2 Intonation Learning theory (see publications No. 1, 4, 7 and 12 from the candidate's Selected Publications List); **analysis of Bulgarian speech rhythm** in comparison with English applying Rebecca Dauer's (1987) model and suggesting some new directions in conducting future contrastive investigations of speech rhythm (see publications No. 1 and 2); **influence of L1 prosody on L2 prosody** in the pronunciation of Bulgarian learners of German or English, outlining the interference of the mother tongue rhythm in the L2 prosodic realizations of the targeted group of speakers, as well as impeding their comprehension of L2 speech (see publications No. 1, 6, 8, 9 and 10); and last but not least, the similar **prosodic interference in the speech production of bilinguals** related to the influence of the individual's dominant language (see publications No. 3, 11 and 14). In most of the academic publications submitted by associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova for the purposes of the present selection procedure there is a clear focus on the practical implications of the theoretical studies and in particular on the pedagogical aspects of her research outcomes, so she her contribution **to the theory of L2 acquisition** is also significant, esp. in relation to **the teaching and learning of English pronunciation** by Bulgarian philology students, with a special emphasis on speech prosody (see publications No. 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 15 from the candidate's Selected Publications List). The

¹ 4 of which are peer-reviewed and referenced in Scopus and/or Web of Science.

² Only one of the articles (Dimitrova, S., Filipov, V. (2005). *Global Spaces, Accent Spaces and their Perception by Bulgarians*) dates back to the period before her habilitation but was probably not used in for the purposes of that procedure.

latter is a logical continuation of her research interest in linguodidactics professed from the very beginning of her academic career and manifested in the publication of the manual *Английското произношение (English Pronunciation for Bulgarians)* [Vezni-4 Publishing House, 2003, ISBN 954-997-716-1]. In the same vein, her article No. 5 in the Selected Publications List, entitled “*Teaching English Pronunciation during the Covid Pandemic*”, zooms in on a highly topical issue related to the challenges of teaching and learning L2 pronunciation online, and in it the author also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of a number of digital resources which students could use for individual work on various segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the foreign language pronunciation.

In her Citation Report, associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova describes in full detail a total of **17 individual references** by other Bulgarian and foreign scholars to **5 of her academic publications** (2 publications of hers as a single author and 3 in which she is a co-author), 2 of which published before 2007 and 3 – during the time-period under review here³, but none of the five listed in the Citation Report publications appears in the candidate's Selected Publications List. Still, it is noteworthy that **12** out of the seventeen individual references to the candidate's publications are made by authors who published their work in journals or collective volumes which are peer-reviewed and referenced in renowned academic research databases. In addition, it is also important to mention the fact that Google Scholar reports of a total of **316 individual references** to date⁴ to all of the 22 of the candidate's academic publications uploaded on the platform (<https://scholar.google.bg/citations?user=1PnyZDcAAAAJ&hl=en>⁵), and out of those 103 have been made since 2017; however there is no more information about them in the candidate's Citation Report. Still, this fact on its own is indicative of the significance and scientific resonance of the candidate's research publications.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I can say with conviction that the academic publications, documents and supporting evidence submitted by associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova for the purposes of the current selection procedure for the academic position of PROFESSOR testify to her research qualities and her original academic contributions to the field of Philology (and in particular to the study of Phonetics and Phonology), as well as to her skills and experience of transferring the theoretical achievements into the practice of foreign language learning and teaching.

Considering all of the above, I am convinced that associate professor Snezhina Dimitrova's application for the academic rank of PROFESSOR meets the minimum national requirements under art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*

³ Dimitrova, S., Jun, S-A. (2015). “Pitch accent variability in focus production and perception in Bulgarian declaratives”; Dimitrova, S., Chernogorova, Ts. (2012). “English pronunciation models and tertiary-level students: A Bulgarian perspective” и Dimitrova, S., Turk, A. (2012). “Patterns of accentual lengthening in English four-syllable words”

⁴ 5 August 2022

⁵ see the note at the end of the candidate's citation report

and the *Regulations* for its implementation at Sofia University, so I fully support her election for the academic position of PROFESSOR in the professional field of **2.1. Philology (Phonetics and Phonology /English language/)** at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

5 August 2022

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Gyuzeleva', written in a cursive style.

/Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, PhD/