

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Antonia Mihaylova Zambova-Petrova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

on the competition for the academic position of associate professor at Sofia University

"St. Kliment Ohridski" in the field of higher **education 2. Humanities**, professional field

2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language – Stylistics)

Data about the competition: By order No. RD 38-216 of 27.04.2023 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" I have been appointed as a member of the jury for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in professional field **2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language – Stylistics)**, announced in the State Gazette, issue 24 of 17.03.2023, with the only candidate being chief assistant Dr. Yana Lyubenova Sivilova. From the submitted documents and materials on the procedure it is seen that Dr. Yana Lyubenova Sivilova meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the 3PACPF.

Data about the candidate. She is a graduate of the National High School of Ancient Language and Cultures "Saint Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher" in Sofia, which laid a good classical foundation for her philological education. In 2001 she received her Master's degree in Slavonic Philology from Sofia University with a major in Polish language and literature and a professional qualification of philologist, teacher of Bulgarian language and literature. She earned a PhD degree in 2009 in General and Comparative Linguistics from Sofia University with the thesis "**Games with the meaning of words – puns and absurd**". After passing a competition in January 2011, she joined the Faculty of Bulgarian Language in SU first as an assistant and then from November 2011 as a chief assistant. Prior to that she worked as a visiting assistant at the Department of General, Indo-European and Balkan Linguistics of the same faculty, and also at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She worked as a translator for the state administration, in the Ministry of Youth and Sports and in the Road Infrastructure Agency. Her research interests include phraseology, stylistics, etymology, comparative linguistics and sociolinguistics. In connection with these she has been twice on specialization at the University of Warsaw and on a summer course in Polish at Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in the city of Lublin. She has presented papers at numerous scientific conferences at home and abroad and participated in various research projects. She is fluent in several living and dead languages - Polish, English, Russian, and others, which facilitates her etymological and comparative research.

Scientific works and contributions

Yana Sivilova participates in the competition for Associate Professor with one monograph, *Archaeology of the Phrase*, and 24 articles published in Bulgarian and foreign journals and proceedings of national and international conferences. Most of them appear in the abstract list of NACID НАЦИД, - 18 authored and 6 co-authored with other scholars. Four articles are in English and one in Russian, making them accessible to the international scientific community. Ten of the articles are in the field of stylistics, nine are related to etymology and phraseology, one is devoted to the definition of the concept of phrase, two are in the field of folklore and two deal with problems of onomastics.

The main work submitted for the competition is the monograph *Archaeology of the Phrase*, published by St. Kliment Ohridski University Press in 2022. It consists of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion, a total of 257 pp. of text, 38 pp. of bibliography and an index of expressions in Bulgarian, which greatly facilitates the reader. Each chapter ends with a summary of the theses and observations. **The introduction** presents the topic and purpose of the work - to offer a comprehensive study on the origin of Bulgarian expressions. It includes common colloquial and slang phrases as well as expressions from literary phraseology. The topic is relevant and interesting not only for specialists, but also for the general public, and the tasks that the author sets herself are ambitious and complex. Something she is aware of. A brief description of the study is also given in the introduction.

In the first chapter, *Dimensions of the Phrase*, Yana Sivilova undertakes the difficult task of distinguishing her main working unit, the *phraseme*, not only from key linguistic concepts such as word, sentence or text, but also from a number of related paremic genres such as proverb, laff, sentence, cliché. At the end of this chapter, the author defines the main concept - the *phraseme* - as separately formed, i.e. larger than the word, a reproducible unit of phrase or sentence form that has relative structural stability and conventional character. Irregularity and restrictiveness, as well as imagery and vividness and expressiveness, are indicated as its important signs. In this chapter, the author demonstrates a wide bibliographic awareness and ability to focus, demarcate and define the research object.

In the second chapter, *Historical map of the phrase*, the problems of the origin of Bulgarian phraseology and the different points of view on them are considered. The advantages and disadvantages of the linguistic, ethnographic and folkloristic approach, not only in our country, but also in other Slavic languages, are discussed. Special attention is paid to the international layer in phraseology, originating from Antiquity and from the biblical text, as well as to phrases originating from plots attributed to Aesop. Reasonable hypotheses are made about the much more ancient Eastern origin of some of these phraseologisms. On the basis of several popular Renaissance texts, the time and ways of penetration of these expressions into Bulgarian language are investigated. The complexity of the problem is shown, but also the research opportunities that the combination of linguistic and extralinguistic methods and data provides. And here the author

demonstrates a very good knowledge of sources from different eras and skills for analyzing processes in diachrony.

The third chapter, *Geographical map of the phrase*, examines the main influences in Bulgarian phraseology, borrowing processes, i.e. calquing of phraseological units from neighboring (Turkish, Greek) and leading European languages (Russian, French, German and English). Since calques are foreign structures transmitted with native linguistic material, their study requires the application of different criteria. The author dwells on a large number of publications by our and foreign scientists, outlining the problems and difficulties faced by the research of the ways to calque expressions. An important step in this direction turns out to be the comparison of the expressions used in translations from the Renaissance period with those in Bulgarian works from the same period. The analysis of the various sources shows that the level of phraseology is more permeable and unstable than the lexical one. The author makes the important conclusion that calquing in the field of phraseology is rather the rule than an exception and the phraseological system of the language is very permeable to foreign influences. According to her, this is due to the imagery and mobility of phraseology, which can easily be adapted and appropriated by another cultural community. Based on rich material from various sources, including her own corpora, Sivilova traces the ways in which new calqued expressions from the English language entered Bulgarian language, the reasons for their rapid spread under the influence of language fashion as well as for their relatively short life. In this chapter, the author makes important and helpful comparisons and offers compelling conclusions on the rich material she examines.

The fourth chapter of the study, *Genre Map of the Phrase*, is entirely stylistic and was of most interest to me. Here Yana Sivilova applies her analytical skills to texts from a variety of oral and written genres. She also contributes an analysis of the role of phrasemes in natural dialogue and polylogue, based on a material excerpted from corpora of spoken speech as well as her own recordings. It convincingly illustrates how sustained routines facilitate the efforts of both speaker and listener in interpreting statements and placing them in a particular communal perspective. The phrasemes affirm certain values, assist in evaluating and making sense of what is being said, and in this sense serve a manipulative function. Of particular interest is the study of the functions of phraseology in such formulaic genres as weather forecasting. Yana Sivilova discusses an interesting authorial approach to removing patterns from this highly clichéd genre through puns, literalizing and parodying the meaning, word games, etc., which ultimately lead to the creation of new clichés. The author pays special attention to the key role of phrasemes in various journalistic genres and especially in hard and soft news. In them, they perform important functions in imitating conversational communicative strategies, in attracting readers' attention and in establishing populist discourse as a value. Populist speech, in which phrases occupy a significant place, claims accessibility and solidarity and through them offers easy solutions, based on traditional thinking, to complex contemporary social problems. The media's promotion of such speech implies that the knowledge and competence of specialists can be replaced by

simple speech, which often contains more aggression than solidarity. The author aptly illustrates her well-founded thesis with the speech behaviour of B. Borissov as a prime minister and his coverage in the media. She also draws attention to the important function of phrasemes as a primary genre in feuilleton, where they are parodied, distorted and transformed, becoming a satirical cultural framework that sets a certain perspective on deviant behaviour.

Very interesting and valuable are Sivilova's analyses of the functions of phrasemes in various artistic texts. In poetry, a leading technique is the modification, the transformation of phrasemes, by which individual authorial metaphors, easily recognizable and perceived by the audience, are created from established, lexicalized metaphors. Persistent word combinations also participate in the lyrical narrative as familiar images that balance pathos and create ironic distance. In M. Ruskov's "Chamkoria", the author examines the role of phraseology in the construction of a narrative technique known as SKAZ. On the one hand, they are used to create a convincing illusion of oral narrative, while on the other hand, by combining different ideological clichés, the speech of different ideologies is devalued. In this way, according to Sivilova, the punning language constructed as a mosaic of codes parodies the grand narratives, and the populist idea of the wisdom of the common man, though undermined, remains the most persistent value perspective in the novel. Its ambiguous narrative imposes itself as a rejection of ideology and precludes any possibility of making sense of and ordering the world. In this chapter, Yana Sivilova proves herself to be a thorough analyst with extensive practical experience, original ideas, and a high theoretical culture.

The **conclusion** of the book sparingly formulates the main conclusions of the study as well as some possible directions for future work. The extremely rich **bibliography** illustrates the author's broad philological culture and erudition. The appended **index** of the researched expressions in Bulgarian is very useful for the reader and facilitates reference.

The monograph *The Archaeology of the Phrase* is a highly competent and professional work that presents its author in the best light. In this study Yana Sivilova proves herself to be an experienced scholar with a broad philological culture, in-depth knowledge and analytical skills in the fields of stylistics, phraseology, semantics, etymology, comparative linguistics, lexicology, etc. In each chapter of the book, the author presents us with interesting facts and ideas, demonstrates an excellent knowledge of the material and literature on the issues under study, and seeks new complex approaches that yield the best results. The work is contributory in many areas, yet it reads easily as the style is accessible, clear and precise and engages the reader.

In addition to the work under review, Dr. Yana Sivilova has submitted 24 articles to the competition, covering a variety of topics in stylistics, etymology of phrases, folkloristics and onomastics. Of these, the most interesting to me were the first ten, which deal with stylistic issues different from those explored in the book. The articles enrich the picture of the author's diverse interests and analytical skills. Some of them, 2, 4, 9 from the list of abstracts of publications, deal with the manipulative possibilities of rhetorical devices such as rhetorical

proof and irony. The article *Rhetorical Proof* discusses the manipulative specificity of rhetorical arguments based not on facts but on established cultural metaphors from which persuasiveness is derived. The article *Irony as Echo* addresses the role of irony as the purposeful repetition and distortion of another person's statement, with a primary focus on the rejection of their position through the rhetorical technique of *reductio ad absurdum*. Another article, *Foreign Speech in Ironic Speaking*, explores the techniques of hidden meaning and understating the source utterance in ironic speech in radio and television programs and the ways in which negative evaluation is formed. Two other articles are devoted to the interpretation of proverbs and the use of personal names in them. The role of phrasemes in narrative and in some formulaic media genres is also examined - an issue that is also discussed in the book. The articles *The Symbol of Water in the Narrative of M. Penkov's East of the West* and *Once More on Eros, Thanatos, and Agape* are highly qualified examples of rhetorical and cultural analysis of fiction. All the articles reviewed present their author as a competent and erudite analyst with a broad theoretical background and extensive practical experience.

Yana Sivilova has provided 11 noted citations, including one in a foreign journal and one review of the monograph.

The contributions in the author's works are correctly, though rather sparingly indicated.

Teaching

Chief assistant Yana Sivilova has given lecture courses in stylistics to students majoring in Bulgarian philology and in general linguistics to students majoring in speech pedagogy, primary school pedagogy and preschool pedagogy. She has given seminars in stylistics, lexicology, language culture, general linguistics and general and romane linguistics to students majoring in different fields and faculties. I have direct impressions of her work in lexicology and stylistics with students majoring in Bulgarian philology. She takes them on in their first year of lexicology and definitely manages to awaken their interest in linguistics. She remains for them one of the most helpful and memorable lecturers, and when in their fourth year they start work on stylistics they already have the necessary basic knowledge, despite of the great distance over the years of the two related courses. With her broad philological background and professional experience, chief asst. Yana Sivilova engages the students, offers them a variety of information and useful tasks, and develops their analytical skills and linguistic sense. She has known them since their first year, monitors their development and supports their professional growth. That is why she is a highly valued lecturer who has the respect of the students.

In the scientific and professional life of the Faculty of Bulgarian Language, chief assistant Dr. Yana Sivilova takes active part in the discussed problems and works and defends well-reasoned opinions. She also participates in numerous scientific projects.

Conclusion

Both the teaching work and the valuable scientific contributions in the monograph and the numerous publications of the candidate give me every reason to vote positively and to confidently recommend to the esteemed jury to elect chief assistant Dr.Yana Lyubanova Sivilova, to the academic position of **Associate Professor** at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language – Stylistics).