

## **PEER REVIEW**

**By Petya Nacheva Osenova, PhD, professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"**

of the materials presented for the selection procedure  
for obtaining the academic position of **'Professor'**  
**at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"**

in the field of higher education 2. Humanities

professional field 2. 1. Philology

(Bulgarian Language, Modern Bulgarian Language (Lexicology))

### **Particulars of the procedure**

By Order No. ПД 38–201 / 26.04.2023 of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" I was appointed as a Member of the Scientific Jury in the selection procedure for obtaining the academic position of 'Professor'. In the selection procedure for obtaining the academic position of 'Professor' announced in *State Gazette* no.24, dated 17.03.2023, the only candidate is Associate Professor Nadezhda Ivanova Mihailova-Stalyanova, PhD.

The set of materials presented by the candidate includes all documents needed for the procedure. Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Art.2b, Para.2 and 3 of DASRBA, as well as the requirements of the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Featured publications are original and authored by the candidate.

### **Particulars of the Candidate**

In 1996, Ass.Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova graduated in Polish and Bulgarian Philology as her first major, and English Philology as a second major from Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski". In 2000, she received the scientific and educational degree "Doctor of Philology". The topic of her dissertation work is "Verba percipiendi in the Bulgarian and Polish languages". In

2002, she started working at the Department of Bulgarian Language at the Faculty of Slavic Philology. In 2014, the candidate acquired the academic position of "Associate Professor". Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova is the founder and Director of the Centre for Analysis of Political and Journalistic Speech. She is also involved in rather intense project activities, being the head of over ten projects under various research programs. She is the Editor-in-chief of "Bulgarian Speech" magazine. The candidate was a guest lecturer under the Erasmus program and specialised in a number of countries, including the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary.

### **Research works description**

The candidate has participated in the procedure presenting a total of 37 publications, as follows: 2 monographs; 25 articles, of which 9 published in indexed editions; 3 dictionaries; 7 university students help books. One of the two monographs is co-authored, written in English. Of the 9 articles published in indexed editions, 4 are sole-authored and 5 are co-authored. Of the 16 articles in non-refereed publications, 9 are sole-authored. The dictionaries are co-authored, and two of these are dedicated to linguistic terms for Slavists and one is a thematic dictionary of the Bulgarian, Czech, Polish and Ukrainian languages. The university students help books are also co-authored and contain vocabulary for foreigners studying Bulgarian language, and texts in Bulgarian language for translation by foreigners.

### **Scientific contributions**

Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova's scientific papers can be grouped into several thematic areas: *Phraseology*, *Public Speech*, *New Words and Meanings*, *Teaching Bulgarian as a Foreign Language*. This is not unexpected, since the candidate has standing interests in broad, yet conceptually related, linguistic fields. There are 3 articles (2.3, 3.2, 3.10) belonging to the *Phraseology* thematic area. They consider phraseology from the point of view of the linguistic picture of the world and from the point of view of their modern use, the sphere of the so-called political correctness included. The articles examine Balkan phraseology and some types of persistent expressions. It is not by chance that the publications in the thematic area of *Public Speaking* (2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 3.11, 3.1, 3.8, 3.12), are most numerous, namely 7. The candidate has made major contributions with her observations and analyzes of Bulgarian public speaking. These articles examine various aspects of public speech, including political speech, speech behavior online, the functioning of certain language units in the context of politically correct

speech, and non-discriminatory strategies. Studied have been the parameters of youth oral communication, online forums, pre-election messages of politicians. I would like to highlight the author's socially significant focus on the mechanisms of the use of offensive vocabulary and language aggression in various spheres of communication. Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova has presented 3 articles (3.6, 3.9, 3.14) in the thematic area of *New Words and Meanings*. These texts describe specific processes of the dynamics of the lexical system in the Bulgarian language. Considered have been the semantic volume and figurative meanings of a number of lexemes, including vision, responsibility, expertise etc. In the last highlighted thematic area, *Teaching Bulgarian as a Foreign Language* (2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.13, 3.15), the candidate has laid special emphasis on the specifics of foreign language learning in a Slavic environment. Examined through teaching methods have been inter-linguistic influences and kinship between languages; the practical aspects of teaching; the role of lexicography in learning. Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova has presented seven students help books which contain exercises on lexicology and lexical semantics. It is notable that 5 of the help books were published abroad, and 5 of them were uploaded to the Internet sites of university libraries and granted free access to them. The candidate has also included three dictionaries, of which two volumes of the *Dictionary of Linguistic Terms for Students of Slavic Studies* and a four-language thematic dictionary, which contains 21 semantic nests from different thematic areas.

Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova has submitted for the procedure two monographs, one of which is co-authored; however, in terms of volume, it fulfills the requirement for a monograph with respect to each of the co-authors.

The first monograph, which is a sole-authored work of the candidate, is entitled "Speech in Contemporary Bulgarian Society" and has the following bibliographical data - ISBN: 978-954-326-413-1, Paradigma, Sofia 2020, 156 pages. Cited have been more than 60 bibliographical sources. The enormous illustrative material that verifies the author's ideas is impressive. The monograph consists of an introduction, 5 chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. The author examines the dynamics in the lexical processes of the Bulgarian language, which is an extremely topical issue. A number of processes have been discussed, including the ingress of foreigners into the speech and the change of the semantic volume of already established lexical units. The author does not stick strictly to field of linguistic phenomena per se, but makes associations with the use of terms and common vocabulary in society. She is interested in neutral vs. emotionally

charged speech, as well as their relevance or irrelevance in political and social life. It is a continuation of the theme from a number of her publications about offensive speech and the speech of aggression, and their impact on society. The parts "Language aggression and society" and "Language, speech and political correctness" examine the recommended or impermissible use of certain lexemes in certain contexts. A very topical issue has also been discussed, namely, the influence of gender-neutral language on the terminological system of law. Presented have been the mechanisms of language aggression. The sections "New Words and Meanings" and "Political Speech" present analyzes of pre-election speech strategies of persuasion and manipulation. Here, considered has also been the high metaphorization in political speech. Examined have been the changes in the semantic volume of the lexemes. The Phraseology section focuses on the use of some phraseological patterns in the media. The author pleads for a revision of the approaches to creating phraseological dictionaries in terms of taking into account their diverse implementation. Discussed have been some questions concerning the mechanisms of mastering phraseology and idiomatics of the native language. I agree with the author's opinion in the conclusion that it is not foreign words that threaten the Bulgarian language, but the ignorance of its native speakers. Notable is that the book also touches the role of the media in the formation of a modern critical public sphere. Examined have been the accents in media self-regulation. Accordingly, the approach is again interdisciplinary, bridging the ethical code of the media and the relevant regulatory framework. The problem of freedom or lack of freedom of expression in the context of the so-called political correctness has been thoroughly accessed.

The candidate has provided a really impressive list of citations (over 60 so far as I can judge), but as the list is presented in a way that is difficult to navigate, I will comment on the citations provided for the Minimum National Requirements. There are 17 of them, and 3 of these are in indexed editions. One thing is clear - the candidate has a lot of citations, which means that her work has a large impact on the scientific community in her areas of studying language.

### **Teaching activities**

Ass. Prof. Mihailova-Stalyanova has had seminar classes on lexicology and phonetics of the Bulgarian language. Currently, she is running lecture courses in the Bachelor's and Master's programs at the Faculty of Slavic Studies, as follows: Lexicology of the Bulgarian language, Phonetics and Lexicology of the Bulgarian language, Public Speech, Communication and

Manipulation (for the specialties of Bulgarian Philology and Slavic Studies at the FSS), Political and Journalistic Speech (MP "Linguistics"), teaching Bulgarian as a Foreign Language - Opportunities and Challenges (MP "Transborder Bulgarian Studies"). In addition, the candidate holds a certificate from the University of Cambridge as an English teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Having acquainted myself with the materials and scientific works of the candidate presented for this selection procedure, and having analyzed their significance and contributions, I confidently give my positive assessment and recommend that the Scientific Jury should elect Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Mihailova-Stalyanova, PhD, to the academic position of "Professor" at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Bulgarian Language (Lexicology).

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