

STATEMENT

with regard to participation in the competition for the position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
in professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language - Stylistics)
of Yana Sivilova

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In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language - Stylistics) Yana Sivilova participated with 1 monograph and 24 articles (6 co-authored), which testify to the thematic diversity and depth of her interests. The formed linguistic sense, maturity and her own research style have been achieved as a result of a long process of creative search in the field of general linguistics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, phraseology, folklore, children's speech, etc.

The monograph 'Archaeology of Phrase' represents an interdisciplinary study with a focus on the origins, usage, and stylistic functions of over 400 Bulgarian literary and colloquial phrases. The work sets forth clearly defined aims and objectives, and its conclusions are both profound and original. The text is expertly constructed, delving into the origins and usage of the phrasemes under examination. The richly imaginative exposition focuses on widely recognised Bulgarian literary and colloquial phrases that find vibrant use across various types of texts. Notably, the author employs specific criteria to describe a continuum of units situated between idioms and free phrases, providing insights into the characteristics of these phrases. The author's distinctive perspective on the etymology of the linguistic material under study is conveyed with clarity and precision, and an analysis of its stylistic functions in literary and non-literary contexts is offered. Throughout the text, the depth of the analysis is evident, and the author's ability to formulate interesting thoughts and reach intriguing conclusions is notable. The monograph convincingly argues that the imagery and expressiveness of some phrases predetermine their stylistic function and lead to divergent interpretations in the etymological discussion.

Sivilova applies a complex approach to linguistic material, in line with the contemporary view of language interacting in synergy with the culture of a given linguistic community. The research focuses primarily on the synchronic state of units, observing their functioning within diverse contemporary contexts. However, its far reaching objective is to find the harmonious complementarity of the synchronic and diachronic in phraseological semantics. Many of the phrases are traced in the cultural spaces of different communities. The research pays particular attention to international phraseologies that have been borrowed and have traversed languages since Antiquity and biblical texts up to the modern era. The analysis of the formal and semantic changes that occur when phrases change context, Sivilova offers logical insights into the historical path and archaic notions underlying these phrases. It is essential to recognise that the direction and ultimate goal of her research are in harmony with the scholarly endeavours of other researchers aiming to discover the rich layer of international phraseology in the various languages of Europe (see E. Piirainen, *Europeanism, internationalism or something else? Proposal for a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research project on widespread idioms in Europe and beyond*. *Hermes, Journal of Linguistics*, 35, 2005). By examining data on borrowings in Bulgarian phraseology from neighbouring Balkan and other European languages, Sivilova draws valuable conclusions about the dynamics of the phraseological system during the Renaissance. Her comparative analysis of original and translated texts from the Renaissance period leads her to significant questions in the fields of theoretical linguistics, stylistics, linguoculturology, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and more. For instance, she delves into the reasons behind the extensive borrowing of phrases from one language to another, the permeability and instability of the phraseological system, whether such phenomena are driven by linguistic fashion or a desire to associate with culturally prestigious communities, and the widespread practice of calquing, among other intriguing topics.

Of particular interest in this study is the chapter titled "Genre Map of the Phrase". The author presents a compelling argument that genre not only shapes the textual construction but also serves as a fundamental cognitive and axiological category influencing the organisation of human communication. In this chapter, the author considers the nuances of domestic dialogue, recognising its diversity depending on the topic, situation, and participants involved in the communicative process. The author convincingly demonstrates the significant function of ready-made phrases, which not only ease the encoding and decoding of content but also serve to manipulate the interlocutor's attention and

convey emotional evaluations within the text. The role of formulas to signal connectedness to a particular cultural model and membership of a particular community has been astutely highlighted. Throughout the text, the author proposes an original interpretation of the role of phrasemes in specific text types (see e.g. the analysis of the transformed formulaic nature of the weather forecast By Emil Cholakov; the secondary function of phrasemes in soft and hard news as a general European trend; the generation through the use of phrasemes of interesting authorised metaphors in poetry, the use of new levels of meaning through the "tension" created between contextual meaning and intertextual meaning; the use of phrasemes in phatic dialogue and narrative, etc.).

Due to the limited scope of the format of the present statement, we shall mention here only a few of Yana Sivilova's other publications from the field of stylistics and phraseology. Of particular interest is the article "What language do alien races speak?", which extends beyond a mere study of the stylistic possibilities of the prefix game. It appeals not only to specialists in linguistic typology, semiotics and cognitive linguistics but also to a broader audience due to its intriguing and provocative topic - the mistakes made by aliens in mastering human language. The article reflects on the hidden impulses that underline linguistic behaviour and explores the boundless nature of language "games", devoid of fixed rules and rigid boundaries. It convincingly demonstrates that language is characterised by strict systematicity at all levels. Yet, it acknowledges the presence of "significant" errors in cognitive terms, which, when interpreted, provide valuable insights into human mentality and shows J. Sivilova's excellent knowledge of the fundamental nature of language and keen understanding of the typological classification of the world's languages.

In the article "Rhetorical Proof", Sivilova directs attention to the specificity of rhetorical arguments based on conventional metaphors. The fact that the manipulative nature of such arguments rooted in archetypal structures is successfully recognised by the audience and directs listeners to search for a certain hidden motivations is highlighted. The article goes on to explore the use of unusual techniques, such as use of personal names in genres where the individual, by definition, has no place; the use of phonetic repetition; ways of deploying symbolic meanings through traditional notions, folk songs and biblical narratives; the application of narrative techniques in 1st person singular narratives. These discussions are conducted in a professional and self-aware manner, elevating the scholarly nature of the article. Reflections on the stylistic peculiarities of the texts under consideration are made through the prism of anthropocentricity. This perspective leads to an examination of language in action, involving the careful selection and combination of linguistic signs and features,

superimposed on the text's obligatory features as a universal mental-verb structure. This approach allows the author to delve into the profound layers of language, seeking additional individual or socially marked knowledge.

The articles on the origin of certain phrases prominently position Sivilova as both an accomplished etymologist and an expert on the nature of figurative language devices. It is hard to argue against the author's conclusion, which underscores the profound nature of phraseology as an open and dynamic entity, subject to the influence of numerous external and internal factors, while simultaneously functioning as a self-organising and self-regulating system. Its specificity as a field "assimilating" features of the national mentality, but also incorporating various international peculiarities and motifs is clearly outlined. Notably, the articles emphasize that the innovations generated by evolutionary means are interpreted as arising from evolutionary processes of non-linear nature, akin to what other scholars have termed "modes of exacerbation and prominence of more than one steady state" (Alefirenko). From this perspective, phraseology is aptly defined as an entity embodying discursive-cognitive synergies and depending on associated sociocultural stereotypes and connotations.

In conclusion, Yana Sivilova's participation in the competition for Associate Professor is marked by a substantial and contributory scientific output. Her erudition and expertise as a scientist are evident in the breadth and depth of her research work, which further underscores her high level of teaching competence. Considering the quality and significance of her contributions to the field of Philology, I wholeheartedly propose Yana Sivilova be elected Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language - Stylistics).