

## STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Petya Nikolova Barkalova, PhD,

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for the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

by field of higher education 2.1. Philology, professional field *Bulgarian language - Applied Linguistics*

In the competition for associate professor, announced in the State newspaper, issue 22 from 16.03. 2021 for the needs of the Faculty of Slavic Philology, the only candidate is Venera Georgieva Mateeva-Baicheva.

### 1. General presentation of the received materials

By order № RD 38-240 of 17.05.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Sofia University) I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Sofia University in the field of higher education. Education 2.1 Philology, professional field Bulgarian language - Applied Linguistics, announced for the needs of the Faculty of Slavic Philology.

The only candidate, Dr. Venera Georgieva Mateeva-Baicheva from the Faculty of Slavic Philology, submitted documents for participation in the announced competition.

The folder of electronic materials presented by Venera Mateeva-Baicheva is in accordance with the Regulations for development of the academic staff of Sofia University and includes 18 types of documents in the order of the procedure - diplomas, certificates, references, curricula of courses plans, project documents, scientific publications, etc. The biographical data of the candidate, her teaching, project, scientific and professional experience are entirely in connection with the announced competition.

### 2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

The experience gained in teaching Bulgarian to foreigners is indisputably proven in the field of working with students and preparing lecture courses, as well as in the field of project work and research and the creation of quality scientific products. The total number of teaching hours of the candidate in the last 6 years is 2988 hours, ie. an average of 498 hours per academic year.

### 3. Assessment of the scientific capacity of the candidate

The habilitation work of Venera Mateeva-Baicheva is presented as an already published monograph entitled *Linguistic Aspects of Sharing Foreign Culture (Modern Methodology and Procedures in Teaching Bulgarian as a Foreign Language)*. Erove, Sofia, 2021, 190 p.

At the center of the study are the linguistic aspects of the mastery of the Bulgarian language by foreigners. Although the title focuses on culturological parameters (on language and culture as a tool for cultural identification of Bulgarian), the book is structured more as a linguistic methodological study in two main parts: a theoretical overview through the prism of

applied linguistics (first and second chapters) and author's research in a full cycle from empirical observations to analyzes and conclusions, dedicated to the mastery of the Bulgarian language as a foreign language (third and fourth chapters), with the focus on the acquisition of noun phrase and verb phrase in the Bulgarian language by foreign students.

The author presented developed questionnaires to check the preparation of the respondents for each of the observed categories, and the conclusions are defended on the basis of over 250 separate answers. Systematic, quantitative and qualitative parameters are analyzed, typologies of errors/mistakes are derived, the typological reasons for their generation are discussed, but also cognitive moments in the processing, the mother tongue of the learner is always taken into account. A sign of professional experience is the basing of formally presented morphological and syntactic (word-order) models, which corresponds to the fact that the basic syntax is based on universal grammar and what can be called "grammar in the mind". The strongest proof of complete mastery of the subject matter (on its "backbone", in the words of the author) I see in the lists presented in the exhibition with numerous (over 50 in total) practical tasks, which are shared know-how for the core of the grammar lesson. This transfer of knowledge is an honor for every humanist.

The fifth chapter puts the Bulgarian language on the map of the European language family, examines new facts and trends in the profile of Bulgarian language learners, problematizes the reform of concepts, models and methodologies in the context of certification.

The monograph highlights the author's ability for theoretical thinking in great scope and depth, as well as her excellent linguistic training as a Bulgarian philologist. The ability to systematize theoretical concepts and facts in the linguistic field is evident. The ability to follow paradigms and traditions has also been demonstrated. A sense of detail in the practical construction of the grammar lesson is demonstrated, along with the ability to language modeling. There is also a visionary attitude towards the language policies in the field of Bulgarian language teaching for foreigners in our country. The assertion of belonging to the primary academic unit, in which the potential of the author develops, the sharing of innovative and already achieved collective results with a unified and recognizable methodical handwriting (together with E. Hadjieva, R. Vlahova, R. Manova) also makes a good impression.

It is presented as a book the dissertation of the author *On the complex constructions in children's speech. Model of the ontogenesis of the complex sentence in the Bulgarian language*. Erove, Sofia, 294 p. The work is one of the rare monographs in our country, which presents a model of the ontogenesis of a complex sentence in the early speech development of Bulgarian children with the development of the topic of the ontogenesis of complex sentences in the speech of children with Bulgarian as a mother tongue.

Three publications in scientific journals are presented, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information. One of them is a linguodidactic *Bulgarian study Interference errors in the use of the verb to be in the Bulgarian speech of foreigners*. - In: *Bulgarian Language and Literature*, 62, 5, 2020; the second is a methodical assessment of the work in an electronic environment in the conditions of the restrictions related to the pandemic; the third is a review of another work. Of interest is the study of the apparent resilience of interference errors in the acquisition of the Bulgarian language by foreigners. The focus of research attention is on the use of the *to be* verb forms. Without disputing the conclusions of the author, because it is known from comparative linguistics that in the Slavic language family Russian, Ukrainian, partly Polish lose *to be/sam* (as a copula also) in present

tence, I would make a terminological clarification: the verb *to be/sam* is "multifaceted" and with a defective paradigm. The distinction imposed in research practice is to be considered an "auxiliary verb" at the morphological level (in the perfect tence forms: *chel sam, byah chel ...*, in the passive conjugation: *pokanen sam, razbit e ...*, in the conclusive: *razbil e prozoretsa, vlyazal e ...*, etc.), and on a syntactic level - for "copula, connection" in the constructions with a predicate: *student e, umoren e, ot glina e* (copula + predicative = compound predicate). The presented model for the word order of the clitics would get a more precise form, related to the scope of both the auxiliary and the copulative verb *to be/sam*.

With the author's handwriting in the spirit of the habilitation work of the nine articles submitted for the competition, published in non-refereed journals, are:

*Trudnosti pri ovladyavaneto na balgarskata mestoimenna sistema v izuchavaneto na balgarski ezik kato chuzhd* [Difficulties in mastering the Bulgarian pronoun system in learning Bulgarian as a foreign language]. - In: *Balgarska rech*, 3, 2018, 58-70 - the errors/mistakes are typed and solutions and tasks for prevention are proposed.

*Usvoyavane na slovoreda na mestoimennite klitiki v obuchenieto po balgarski ezik kato chuzhd*. [Assimilation of the word order of the pronoun clitics in the teaching of Bulgarian as a foreign language.] - In: *Trivium – pateki na znaniето „Rada i priyateli“*. Collection in honor of the 65th anniversary of Prof. Radka Vlahova. IM "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia - defends the thesis that the decisive is the grammatical instruction, presented as a rule scheme, as a model structure.

*Gramatichni formi na skazuemoto pri izrazyavane na uctivost v obuchenieto po balgarski ezik kato chuzhd* [Grammatical forms of the utterance in expressing politeness in teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language.] - In: *Nadmoshtie i prisposobyavane - Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of the Faculty of Slavic Philology*, editor (s): Compilers: Ekaterina Tarpomanova, Krassimira Aleksova, 2017, pp. 370-379 - it is surprisingly proven that the formulas for courtesy (speech etiquette units) are perceived and followed more strictly by foreigners than by native speakers.

Author's innovation with the status of discovery is contained in the article *Sintaktichni konstruktсии i paraleli mezhdur detskata rech i rechta na chuzhdentsi, izuchavashti balgarski ezik*. [Syntactic constructions and parallels between children's speech and the speech of foreigners learning Bulgarian]. - In: *"Nova prakticheska gramatika na balgarskia ezik"*, Gutenberg, Sofia, 2016, pp. 262-267 - an attempt was made to test the hypothesis known as "another language - another childhood". In the parallel tracing of the stages in the acquisition of complex sentences by children and adult foreigners, the author encounters differences that relate to the sequence of coordinatively and subordinately related sentences: first structure in the ontogenesis of children's speech (in children from 2 to 5 years) is coordinative, first in adults is the coordinative structure.

#### **4. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate**

I agree that the attached reference of Venera Mateeva-Baicheva for her scientific contributions in the field of applied linguistics and linguodidactics fully corresponds to the potential shown in the considered production. The scientific production is in accordance with the minimum national requirements (under the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2b, 2/3).

## 5. Critical remarks and recommendations

Against the background of the well-done work in the habilitation work, some discussion positions stand out, which I attribute to overconfidence in the sources used. I will mention two of them. 1. The interpretation of the words *malko, tolkova, nyakolko* as adverbs in the prepositional position (p. 70) is derived from Kurteva 2016, but these words and all numerical numerals are convincingly derived as a prepositional category "quantifiers" (quantitative adjectives) within NP back in 1984 by J. Penchev in "Stroezh na balgarskoto izrechenie". 2. The word order scheme of the particle is in the verb form, adopted according to the instructions of Georgieva, Stavreva 2013 covers only the so-called simple verb forms, because "the place of the particle is after the verb" ("if the sentence begins with a reflexive verb", p. 114) explains *chete se, chete se, cheteshe se* (V se), but not *shte se chete* (shte se V?), *chel se e* (-l se Aux), etc., which require additional formalization and modeling.

I also see overconfidence in the proofreading work on the monograph, as the bibliography lacks many titles mentioned in the text (eg Chomsky 1981, Butler-Hakuta 2006, Ilieva-Baltova 1991, Mihnevich 1985, Juhas 1970, Hodera 2006, Veseli 1985), which makes it difficult to follow a number of initial concepts. A particular weakness of the text in this regard is the citation of indirectly used texts, which also leads to this discrepancy in the bibliography. In the arrangement of the literature, Cyrillic and Latin are mixed without clarity in which alphabetical order the reader's reading should move.

The remarks made do not impair the overall excellent impression of the habilitation work.

## CONCLUSION

In the works of the candidate there are original scientific and applied contributions that have received national recognition. Theoretical developments have practical applicability, as some of them are directly oriented to the educational work. Venera Mateeva-Baicheva's scientific and teaching qualification is undoubted.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, I give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Slavic Philology for the election of Venera Georgieva Mateeva-Baicheva to the academic position of associate professor at Sofia University Kliment Ohridski in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian language - Applied Linguistics).

24.07. 2021

Member of the Scientific Jury: .....

(Assoc. Prof. Petya Barkalova, PhD)