

## OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Svetla Cherpokova, PhD, lecturer in the History of Literature and Comparative Literature Studies Department, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, on the materials, presented for participation in a competition for the academic position of “**Associate Professor**” at the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian as Foreign Language – Translation Studies)

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By order of the Rector of SU “St. Kliment Ohridski” RD – 38-154 from 21.03.2022, I was appointed as a member of the academic jury for the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in higher education in professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian as Foreign Language – Translation Studies), announced in DV, issue 21 from 21.03.2022, for the purposes of the Bulgarian as Foreign Language Department.

The sole participant in the competition is Dr. Iveta Georgieva Tasheva-Dimitrova, M.D. According to the requirements, I would like to confirm that the set of documents and materials presented by the contestant for the purposes of the competition meet all set requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Guidelines for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.” She has presented a published habilitation thesis as a monograph, articles on the topic of the habilitation thesis, and other publications in the field of the competition. The survey to establish whether the minimal national requirements have been met shows that the documents meet all scientometric indicators.

Dr. Iveta Georgieva Tasheva-Dimitrova, M.D. has applied 21 publications on the topic of the competitions. They include a habilitation thesis published as a monograph—*Medical Humanities. Topics, Terminology, Translation* (Sofia: Ciela, 2022)—and published articles related to the topic of the work and the topic of the competition, all in all 20, part of which are in English, published in influential journals, accessible to both Bulgarian and English readers. Part of those journals are within the databases of Web of Science and SCOPUS.

A review of the educational activity of Dr. Tasheva-Dimitrova shows that she has impressive experience as an educator—in the field of medicine and in the field of translation studies, specialized medical translations in particular.

## **2. Introduction to the habilitation thesis and its relevance**

The habilitation thesis published as a monograph—*Medical Humanities. Topics, Terminology, Translation* (Sofia: Ciela, 2022)—provides the Bulgarian circles with a new problem to take under consideration. Medical humanities, a “relatively young discipline”, is a newcomer even on a global scale, as Dr. Tasheva points out at the beginning of her work. This places a series of challenges in front of the author. She must be able to guide the Bulgarian readers through territory that is yet unknown and has not been completely grasped by our scientific knowledge. Furthermore, she needs to convince them that the discipline is relevant and necessary in order to turn them into her allies—something that Dr. Tasheva’s monograph successfully accomplishes.

I dare say that up to this moment and in such volume, this topic has never been presented to the Bulgarian scientific society. This means that the monograph is a pioneer’s work that sets up the field for future research—it assigns the perspectives for unfolding it and, which is especially important, it outlines the problematic sides of such research. The thesis has one essential property—it does not let itself turn into a strictly scientific discourse, it does not flirt with different theories; what it does is it uses theoretical framework to be as useful in practice as possible. It asks important questions, such as about the requirements when translating medical literature and terminology in reality, what are the risks of an incomplete or incorrect translation, what responsibility do translators bear when doing this type of translation, what are the challenges and traps they face.

The text benefits from building on all these points by using accessible and enticing language, understandable both to specialists in the field, as well as a wider audience. Readers feel drawn into a kind of dialogue where necessary issues are being raised in dealing with problems of medical translation; it offers examples that greatly illustrate possible answers, it discusses interdisciplinary questions that put the philologist and the medic in a common field for the good of the patient’s health. At the same time, the door is open for future considerations on the matter, and the readers are provoked to further seek out other problematic cases and examples and think about the path to their solutions.

The work is organized in three chapters, an introduction, an appendix with short commentary, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Using medical terminology, we could argue that Dr. Tasheva’s monograph follows the structure of a medical examination. In the beginning, it takes into consideration the history of the “case” (Introduction and Chapter One), it does a comprehensive “check-up” (Chapter Two), it decides on a clear

diagnosis (Chapter Three), and after that it assigns treatment (Conclusion). It offers “lab and clinical trials” (as seen in Chapter Three and the Appendix with short commentary) that help specify the diagnosis and the type of treatment. This whole structure is compliant with a very noble cause—“responsibility to the patient.” “Because an error in epicrisis or diagnosis,” as the researcher writes, “is not only a bad job on the part of the translator, but it could cost a certain human being their health or life.” That being said, the operation that Dr. Tasheva undertakes could be defined as life-saving—for the future of medical translation in Bulgaria, as well as for the patients it services.

The literary examples are a pleasant addition to the thesis. This allows a new research horizon with a perspective toward interdisciplinarity. I feel that only after reading Dr. Tasheva’s monograph can one realize how widespread the use of medical terminology is outside of specialized journals (in literature, in cinema, in everyday speech, etc.) and just how essential is precise medial translation not only for the sake of the medical science, but for understanding one another. Even a current event, the topic of the coronavirus, which the thesis discusses on a vocabulary level, can remain misunderstood if speakers do not use the necessary terminology that should also be accessible to everybody. Translating synonyms, abbreviations, eponyms—these are but only part of the challenges that a translator faces with medical literature and which the author talks about from an original perspective. Especially interesting are word examples with Latin and Greek roots, as well as commentary about the appearance of English terminology.

There is special focus on “false friends”, which could be life-threatening in a bad medical translation. While reading the section about “false friends” in medical terminology, I thought that a writer of an opinion for a competition for becoming an associate professor, such as this one, could translate it in German and, misled by “false friends”, could use the German word “Konkurs” instead of the appropriate word “Wettbewerb” (meaning “competition”). This couldn’t lead to serious consequences for the contestant, especially if the opinion about the thesis is positive. It would actually serve as evidence that the writer does not understand the language, as the German word “Konkurs” means “bankruptcy”. This would be much less entertaining, however, in a medical context.

One other contribution I recognize in the work of Dr. Tasheva is that she would be especially useful to younger translators—and not only in the field of medical translation. I am convinced that many of them ask analogous questions, feel similar doubts, and

experience similar difficulties when doing translations. Dr. Tasheva's monography definitely provides some methods for dealing with such problems, and it furthermore carries contagious inspiration which will certainly carry over to an aspiring translator.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I declare my wholly positive assessment to the applicant Dr. Iveta Georgieva Tasheva-Dimitrova, M.D., and I recommend that the Scientific Jury elects her for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in professional field: 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian as Foreign Language – Translation Studies).

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Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. Svetla Cherpokova, PhD)