

PEER REVIEW

**by Dr. Petya Nacheva Osenova, Professor at the St. Kliment Ohridski
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of the materials submitted for participation in the competition
for the academic position of **Associate Professor**
at the Stara Zagora Thrace University
in higher education field 2. Humanities
Professional field 2. 1. Philology
(Contemporary Bulgarian Language)

Competition details

By means of Order No. 4379/6.12.2023 of the Rector of the Thrace University, I was appointed as a reserve member of the jury in the competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor'. Due to the withdrawal of a member of the Scientific Jury from the external quota, I agreed to join as an external regular member of the Jury.

Dr Teodora Georgieva Ilieva participated as candidate in the competition for 'Associate Professor', promulgated in State Gazette, issue 88 of 20.10.2023.

The set of materials submitted by the candidate included all the documents required by the procedure. Assistant Dr. Teodora Ilieva has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Article 2b(2) and (3) of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act. The papers submitted by her under the procedure are original works of her own authorship.

Candidate details

Teodora Ilieva graduated in Bulgarian Philology from the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo with a Master's Degree in 2000. In 2015 she was also awarded a Master's Degree in International Economic Relations at the University of National and World Economy. In 2017, the candidate was awarded the degree of Doctor in field 2. Humanities Professional field 2.1. Philology, Bulgarian Language (Old Bulgarian) at the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. In 2021, Dr. Ilieva also completed her studies in the Master's programme of Law at the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. She is currently an assistant professor of Modern Bulgarian Language, Language Culture, Public Speech, Grammatical and Lexical Innovations of the Modern Bulgarian Language at the Stara Zagora Thrace University. She has also worked as a reporter, teacher, translator, proofreader, etc.

The wide scope of knowledge that the candidate has sought in her educational growth in the humanities must be highlighted. It is also noteworthy that Assistant Ilieva has participated in a large number of scientific conferences in Bulgaria and abroad, as well as in a number of training practices and specializations.

Description of the works

The candidate participates in the procedure with one monographic work; four articles in publications indexed in the Scopus or Web of Science databases; ten articles and one study in non-indexed publications. Assistant Ilieva has also submitted an abstract of her thesis. I will not examine this abstract here because it was part of a different procedure, but I will note that by submitting it, the candidate

has demonstrated that she has worked on a completely different topic for the habilitation procedure.

Scientific contributions

The main work related to the procedure is the habilitation paper. For this reason, I will pay slightly more attention to it: *Ilieva, T. (2023). The wordsmith Stoyan N. Mihailovsky in Bulgarian literary and linguistic tradition. ISBN 978-954-305-660-6. Stara Zagora: KOTA Publishing House, p. 238.*

The contributions of the study are numerous: this is the first comprehensive linguistic profile of the writer and public figure Stoyan Mihailovsky; the work also offers an interdisciplinary view of the writer's linguistic behaviour, examining the specifics of linguistic levels in diachronic terms, but also genre features as well as some sociolinguistic parameters in his texts; his contribution to the development of the modern Bulgarian language has been carefully traced and exhaustively described, including from the point of view of codification; a connection has been made with modern types of dictionaries. It should be noted that the author has also worked with the writer's archive. The reviewed text fits into the context of works on codification practices and/or linguistic features and contributions of Bulgarian writers and public figures to the development of the Bulgarian language.

The monograph consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion and is 238 pages long. The cited sources are over 100. They include both grammatical literature and dictionaries, as well as the works of Stoyan Mihailovsky. The candidate has performed invaluable research into the writer's works and the writer's own archives. The monography is written in a very literate and logically well-organized manner. Assistant Ilieva demonstrates that she has excellent command of

linguistic terminology, which, by the way, is quite varied given the multifaceted view of the subject. Another thing I would like to mention is the candidate's ability to make a philological analysis of the texts – in specifics and in depth. It would have been a good idea, however, to provide a list of the terms used and their definitions in the book (similar to the list of abbreviations), or to discuss the terms within the text itself, as has been done for *hapax legomena* on pp. 153-154.

In the *Introduction* Assistant Ilieva introduces the object of her study – the idiolect of Stoyan Mihailovsky. She has also formulated the aim of her study – a description of the linguistic features of his work, in which he himself acts as ‘wordsmith’. The candidate has also formulated a number of tasks – twelve in total – which she fulfils; the period discussed is from the late 1880s to the first quarter of the twentieth century. The examined writer's works are listed, the major ones being 13 in number.

Chapter One is entitled ‘The creative personality and linguistic style of Stoyan N. Mihailovsky’. It is divided into five subparts. In the *first*, the writer is presented in the memoirs of his contemporaries, where the author deftly balances individual statements to show the writer's diverse and occasionally controversial personality. In the *second* subpart, Stoyan Mihailovsky is presented from the perspective of literary criticism. The author stresses that the writer’s work must be examined through an interdisciplinary approach in order to decode the particularities of the genres and methods used by him. The *third* subpart focuses on the writer's idiolect and its place in literary-linguistic processes in the reviewed period. Emphasis is placed on the writer’s controversial personality and behaviour, highlighting positive characteristics that remained ‘unseen; by his contemporaries but have proved important in subsequent years right up to the present day. The author is presented as a man of conservative grammar and modern vocabulary. It is also noted that the writer is a product of the Tarnovo etymological and Russophile school, with his

native Elena dialect and Sofia sociolect also having an influence. The *fourth* subpart is devoted to Stoyan Mihailovsky's views on the linguistic situation in his time. Here the candidate stresses that the writer valued continuity, maintained the vernacular basis of language and was not only a wordsmith but also a purist. The cognitive element in the definition of language – ‘a living expression of folk soul’ – is also highlighted. His view of orthography as a blend of historical and phonetic approaches is also noted. The *fifth* subpart focuses on the genre of the linguistic note in the writer's archive. The author categorizes the archive's notes according to various criteria. These include corrections to the titles of various publications, the avoidance of the use of articles, criticism of poetic patterns, encouragement of the use of grammatical cases, etc. Assistant Ilieva expresses her own position wherever she disagrees with the positions of Mihailovsky himself or those of his critics. Specific examples are also provided in detail.

Chapter Two is devoted to the graphic and orthographic specifics in the work of Stoyan Mihailovsky. The author presents the set of books chosen from the author's oeuvre to represent different genres and styles. Specifics are listed in the context of the writer's understanding that there should be a coherence between written and spoken speech. In my opinion, this chapter should be merged with the next chapter because it is too short and therefore disproportionate to the others. *Chapter Three* deals with the phonetic system in the writer's work. As a positive fact I must note that Assistant Ilieva has reviewed the issue not only in the context of the life development of the writer himself, but also in the context of the codification proposals of the different schools at that time. Thus, it becomes clear that Mihailovsky generally defended the etymological use of the *yat vowel* with a single grapheme of spelling, as well as the use of the graphemes *ѣ* and *ѡ*. The uses of „ѣ“ and „ѡ“, of the ‘я’ grapheme, and of the consonant system – according to its position

in the morpheme type and/or grammatical meaning of the word – are also described in detail. The candidate also presents brief observations on intonation, word stress and doublet forms. *Chapter Four* deals with the morphological system in the work of Stoyan Mihailovsky. The peculiarities of nouns, adjectives and numerals, pronouns, adverbs and verbs (personal and impersonal forms) are examined. In the case of nouns, in addition to the observations on the fluctuations in gender and number, the use of feminatives in different stylistic registers, as well as of diminutives, are of interest. The author also discusses the question of grammatical cases, whose systematic use is defended by Stoyan Mihailovsky. Assistant Ilieva once again defines the writer as ‘a champion of the restoration and multiplication of as many analytical forms and structures as possible’ (p. 96). I found it strange that she talks of analytical forms and structures, since grammatical cases are a marker of syntheticity. It would be a good idea to clarify this statement. The writer's attitude to the article is also clearly shown – avoiding overuse and partially agreeing with the Turnovo school. In the section on the indefinite article, it remains unclear what view the author takes of this grammatical category in order to conclusively analyse the examples. According to the type of concept, in some examples, *one* can be interpreted as an indefinite pronoun. Also according to the type of concept, *one* can be used as an indefinite article in numerous contexts that are more natural for the Bulgarian language, such as ‘*I saw one woman walking down the street*’. In verbs, seven verb tenses (without future prior and future past) are registered. The connections made with the contemporary state of the language are particularly valuable. I would recommend that Assistant Ilieva includes introductory texts after each chapter heading and before specific sub-points. Also, I think it would be more suitable to use the word ‘tendency’ instead of trend. ‘Trend’ simply does not sound scientific enough. I have a similar comment about ‘Participles are persistent’, which should be changed to ‘Participles are present’. *Chapter Five* presents the lexical

system in the writer's works. Similarly to chapters 2, 3 and 4, it also contains various contributions. Assistant Ilieva traces lexical layers by origin and style – diachronic, which includes Old Bulgarian, Church Slavonic, borrowings from the dictionary of Nayden Gerov, dialectal vocabulary, vocabulary of foreign origin (Greek, Latin, Russian, Turkish, a number of Western languages), colloquial and slang vocabulary, stylistic peculiarities. Drawing comparisons to the vocabulary of Stoyan Mihailovsky's contemporary, Ivan Vazov, was an excellent idea, although I would not use the phrase 'Ivan Vazov's lexicon', but rather 'vocabulary'. Further, the candidate discusses single and rarely used words, semantic transfer, tabooing and phrasal verbs. It is noteworthy that the author records 185 single-occurrence words, most of which are also occasionalisms, as well as 50 rare words. In addition, quite a few of these words are also compound words – *чумоукротител* (plague-tamer), *съдбопоказалец* (doom-signalling), *хвалбоизвъртане* (praise-distortion), *враждотворец* (enmity-monger), etc., indicating the writer's preference for synthetic expression. The main word-formation patterns have also been highlighted. In the case of semantic transfer, words with reinterpreted semantics have been studied, including *кандилогасител* (candle extinguisher) with the meaning of *someone halting progress* or *полюлявам* (sway) with the meaning of *beguile, dissuade*. The conclusion presents the preceding chapters in a concise form. In my view, however, the contributions of the study need to be highlighted more strongly.

The candidate's other publications can be divided into the following themes: a) *issues of phraseology* (publications 6.1, 6.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.9), where specific phraseologies are considered only in Bulgarian or in contrastive terms (6.1, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.9), new phraseological expressions in media through mainly metaphorical transfer (6. 2); b) *the study of the language of specific artists* (publications 6.3, 6.4, 7.6, 7.8), where the lexical layers of selected works are examined (6.3); lexical and stylistic aspects

of selected works (6.4, 7.6, 7.8); c) *the study of different aspects of vocabulary* (publications 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 9. 1), where the following are examined: suffixal derivation in some nouns from a diachronic point of view and the continuity chain from the Old and Middle Bulgarian period (7.1), word-formation and ethnopsychological aspects of occasionalisms in media (7.2), the renewal of Bulgarian vocabulary through neologisms and semantic changes (7.3), lexical neologisms with a foreign component in media texts (9.1); d) *issues of abbreviation* (publication 7.10), where abbreviations of recent years are examined from different perspectives – structural, stylistic, functional, etymological.

The candidate's citations submitted for the procedure total 15. Two of them are in indexed journals, eight are in monographs or collections and five in periodicals. This shows that the research carried out by Assistant Ilieva is important for the scientific community.

Teaching work

Assistant Ilieva covers a wide range of courses, including modern Bulgarian language, phonetics and phonology, language culture, public speaking. She teaches a variety of courses such as social pedagogy, special pedagogy, primary school pedagogy and foreign language, preschool pedagogy. The relevant curricula, professionally prepared, are also attached.

Conclusion

The above comments and recommendations in no way detract from the candidate's contributions to the current procedure. Therefore, I would like to state that after reading the materials and scientific works of the candidate presented in the competition, as well as analysing their significance and contributions, I confidently give my positive assessment and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury elects

Assistant Dr. Teodora Georgieva Ilieva to the academic position of Associate Professor at the Thrace University in the field of higher education 2. Humanities Professional field 2. 1. Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language).

05.02.2023