

OPINION

by **Dr. Radka Vasileva Vlahova-Ruykova,**

Professor at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

of the documents and materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of **“Professor” at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski**

in the following area of higher education: 2.1. Humanities. Philology

professional field: Bulgarian Language, Modern Bulgarian Language (Lexicology)

This Opinion has been prepared in compliance with Order No. 33-4140 / 25.08.2020 issued by the Rector of the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski. The announcement for the competition for the position of “Professor” at the Department of Bulgarian Language of the Faculty of Philology was published in the State Gazette, issue 57 of 26 June 2020, and on the website of the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski. The only candidate in the competition is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phil. Sc. Vanya Ivanova Zidarova from the Department of Bulgarian Language of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski.

The candidate has submitted all the necessary documents – diplomas, list of publications (a full list and a list of the publications that appeared after her appointment as Associate Professor); abstracts of the publications in Bulgarian and English, self-assessment of the scientific contributions in Bulgarian and English; information about the courses taught at the University; a CV; a list of citations; an application to the University Rector for admission to the competition. As the Scientific Jury established at its first meeting, the candidate fulfils the requirements of the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) for the academic position of “Professor”.

Vanya Zidarova’s entire professional and scholarly path has been closely tied to the University of Plovdiv. She is a lecturer and scholar of undisputed authority, who is valued not only among her colleagues in the Bulgarian academic community, but also abroad, as attested by her numerous visits as a guest lecturer and a beneficiary of the Erasmus academic exchange programme to the most authoritative centres for Slavic studies in Poland, where she taught at the University of Poznan, the Czech Republic (Charles University), Slovakia, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Greece.

I would like to note in particular that Vanya Zidarova’s publications reflect her vast international experience gained in her work on numerous comparative studies. Equally important, she is an author of university textbooks and student manuals in the subjects she teaches.

The subject of evaluation in this competition are the candidate's works published since her appointment as Associate Professor in 2000, which include: 2 monographs, 4 textbooks and student manuals, 57 articles and papers in conference proceedings.

The monograph titled *Semantics and Pragmatics of Nominal Determination in the Bulgarian Language* („Семантика и прагматика на именната детерминация в българския език“) is based on a dissertation defended for the award of the scientific degree of “Doctor of Philological Sciences” (Dr. Phil. Sc.). Although this work has been discussed and evaluated in relation to the respective procedure, I will briefly dwell on some of its main merits as they shed light on the qualities of Vanya Zidarova as a candidate in this competition.

In this monograph Vanya Zidarova shows the precision and experience of a longtime researcher. She leads the readers through the terminological diversity of the works under discussion, following the best traditions of the Plovdiv school. She examines each of the discussed theoretical accounts in its development and not only shows her deep insight into the views of the individual authors but manages to outline the system behind them. Her critical reading highlights all the contributions of the works, without downplaying their weaknesses. Some of the views presented are further motivated by the author. The monograph is a reliable starting point for all future research on nominal determination in Bulgarian.

Vanya Zidarova formulates major cognitive and communicative-pragmatic features – two binary and one gradable – which define the semantics of the category. The introduction of gradable features corresponds to the communicative-pragmatic approach adopted by the author. The graduality of the opposition *non-identifiedness* – *identifiability* – *identifiedness* is a theoretical choice applied to the end of distinguishing the semantics and uses of two lexical-semantic variants of *един* in its function as a lexical rather than a grammatical determiner. Considering a phenomenon in a gradable perspective, has proved productive in describing various linguistic phenomena. According to the author, in terms of its structure, the category consists of four subspheres/substructures, each of which is characterised by a particular set of features and is expressed by a specific set of determiners that differ in nature – lexical, grammatical or semantic.

The monograph studies comprehensively the role of proper names as semantic determiners. The author explores in depth their meanings in light of their definite and indefinite uses. This chapter may be considered as a separate, self-contained study which delves into the main issues related to proper names as identified in the detailed bibliography. Although the definition of proper names as a type of determiners raises a number of questions (mostly related to grammaticalisation), the author has defended her position in a well-motivated way. In addition, she studies proper names that are combined with other determiners – definite or indefinite articles or pronouns.

The question of the degree of grammaticalisation stands out even more in relation to the determiner *едун*. Vanya Zidarova makes a distinction between two lexico-semantic variants – *едун₁* and *едун₂*. She views *едун₂* as an indefinite pronoun with particular semantics which may combine with definiteness or indefiniteness depending on the point of view of the addresser and / or the addressee. The semantics of *едун₂* is *unique* and denotes *identifiability* of the referent on the part of the addresser and *non-identifiedness* on the part of the addressee. According to her, *едун₂* has not been grammaticalised yet and is therefore considered a lexical determiner rather than an article. Undoubtedly, the formation of a new subsystem is a very complex and slow process. In this particular case one may notice different linguistic trends – the evolving of tripartite systems into bipartite systems and the development of one bipartite system consisting of the opposition zero article: definite article into a tripartite one which involves the establishment of the oppositions *едун*: zero article, *едун*: definite article. The question of the degree of grammaticalisation of the meanings and the existence of transitional zones between the grammatical and the non-grammatical is a topical issue in linguistics. Vanya Zidarova supports her views with sufficient arguments, defending her own scholarly position.

The questions of the degree of grammaticalisation and the morphological nature of certain language units are one of the main topics of interest in Vanya Zidarova's research and she does not hesitate to state and defend her views even when they do not follow the generally accepted concepts. This refers to her account of the particles *ce/cu* as word-forming formants in the verbal domain. Zidarova proposes a restructuring of the lexico-grammatical class of particles by suggesting that the form-forming ones which modify the grammatical or the lexical meaning should be considered as morphemes (cf. №№ 6, 12,). Affixation in various spheres of the lexical system, including in a comparative perspective, is another issue that intrigues the candidate, who has devoted a number of articles to this word-formation mechanism. While confixes have yet to receive a comprehensive explanation, Vanya Zidarova's views provide a point of departure in a discussion that affords a unified account of the status of *da* in complex verb forms and the status of *ce/cu* as word-formation formants and form-forming particles.

Articles No. 7, 39, 40, 41, 44, 48, 49, 50, 52, 55, 56 deal with nominal determination.

Dynamism and Innovations in the Lexical System of the Bulgarian Language („Динамика и иновации в лексикалната система на българския език“) is a monographic study, which is the main work submitted by the candidate in this competition. It proposes an analysis of the expressions of dynamism in the Bulgarian lexical system. Vanya Zidarova explores the main causes, development processes and trends. She pays particular attention to: (i) the changes that have taken place since 1989 as this period is marked by a major shift in the lexical layers with respect to the changes

in connotation; (ii) the borrowing of new words predominantly from English origin and mainly related to computer-mediated communication; (iii) the reintroduction of Turkisms. Vanya Zidarova discusses the convergence of the high and the low language registers and the emergence of new onomastic practices, paying special attention to the language of the media.

I would like to note in particular Vanya Zidarova's observations on diminutives. This is a topic that has yet to receive an in-depth comprehensive account. Zidarova specifically studies diminutives that have neutral nominal designations rather than connotative meaning. She has also delved into the semantics of verbs belonging to the attenuative mode of action (Aktionsart) (cf. articles №№: 8, 10, 18, 22).

Vanya Zidarova has scientific contributions in the field of titrology and the study of contemporary media language practices.

Conclusion:

The candidate in the competition has submitted a significant number of scientific works published later than the materials submitted for her appointment as Associate Professor, including a study defended as a dissertation for the award of the scientific degree of "Doctor of Philological Sciences", a monograph presented as a habilitation thesis in this competition, textbooks and teaching manuals in disciplines taught by the candidate, numerous scientific papers. The works of the candidate have original scientific and applied contributions and have gained international recognition. A representative part of them have appeared in collections of scientific papers published by international academic publishers. Her theoretical works have practical value as some of them are directly applicable in the field of education. Vanya Zidarova's scholarly and teaching qualifications are of indisputable quality.

The results achieved by Vanya Ivanova Zidarova in her teaching and research fully meet the specific requirements of the Faculty of Philology adopted in line with the University of Plovdiv's Regulations for the application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

After acquainting myself with the materials and scientific works submitted by the candidate in this competition and after a careful study of their significance and scientific and applied contributions, I feel confident to give a positive evaluation and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to propose to the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Philology the appointment of Vanya Ivanova Zidarova to the academic position of "Professor" at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski in the professional field 2.1. Humanities. Philology. Bulgarian Language, Modern Bulgarian Language (Lexicology).

20 October 2020 – Sofia

Prof. Dr. Radka Vlahova-Ruykova
(academic position and degree, name, surname)

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

(see 5. of the “Assoc. Professor” / “Professor” Review Form)

CONCLUSION

(see the CONCLUSION in the “Assoc. Professor” / “Professor” Review Form).

20 October 2020 – Sofia

Prof. Dr. Radka Vlahova-Ruykova
(academic position and degree, name, surname)