STATEMENT

by Petya Ivanova Nestorova, PhD

Associate professor in Bulgarian language at the University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv

Regarding a PhD thesis for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of **'Doctor'**

in the higher education area **2. Humanitarian Sciences**

Professional Area **2.1 Philology**

PhD program **Germanic Languages: English Language**

Author: KORNELIA BORISLAVOVA CHOROLEEVA

Subject: "Formation of Lexical Blends in English and Bulgarian"

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. PhD Snezha Todorova Tsoneva-Mathewson, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

By order **№ P-33-4897/08.10.2020** of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury participating in the defense procedure of a doctoral thesis on the subject **"Formation of Lexical Blends in English and Bulgarian"** for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of **'Doctor'** in the higher education area **2. Humanitarian sciences**, professional area **2.1 Philology,** PhD program **Germanic languages: English language.**

The author of the PhD thesis is **KORNELIA BORISLAVOVA CHOROLEEVA**, an independent doctoral candidate at the English Philology Department of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv whose scientific supervisor is **Assoc. Prof. PhD Snezha Todorova Tsoneva-Mathewson**.

The set of paper documents submitted by Kornelia Borislavova Choroleeva is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Rules for Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University and comprises the following documents:

– application to the Rector of Plovdiv University for opening a PhD thesis defense procedure;

– European-format CV;

– preliminary defense minutes from the extended English Philology Department meeting discussion of the candidate's preparation for oral defense;

– PhD thesis;

– PhD thesis abstracts in Bulgarian and English;

– list of scientific publications on the subject of the PhD thesis;

– copies of the scientific publications;

–   declaration for originality and authenticity of the attached documents;

–   reference form concerning the fulfillment of the minimal national requirements.

The doctoral candidate has participated in five specialized conferences where she has presented her work on topics related to the PhD thesis. She has also published two papers in an electronic journal. In all seven publications, Kornelia Choroleeva declares her scientific interests and demonstrates her persistent interest in the topic under study.

Word formation in every language is characterized by dynamic spheres of study which are always worth studying. In this respect, lexical blending is an interesting and up-to-date area of research since it raises a number of problematic issues and linguists are not unanimous as to what is actually lexical blending as a word-formation process. Therefore, Kornelia Choroleeva's formulation of her own definitions of lexical blending is absolutely necessary for the candidate's successful work on her PhD thesis.

The doctoral candidate's PhD thesis focuses on English and Bulgarian blend nouns and compares, classifies, and discusses them using the premises of Cognitive Linguistics. The topic of the PhD thesis has been appropriately chosen because it is up to date and offers great opportunities for research.

Kornelia Choroleeva demonstrates very good bibliographical knowledge since she is well aware of the scientific research on the topic, which is proven by the 250-title reference list. She not only shows her in-depth knowledge of the discussed issues, but she also has her own contribution to the combined analytical model which she analyzes and uses from the standpoint of already applied scientific methods. She combines "Conceptual Integration Theory, as proposed by Faiconnier (1997), Fauconnier and Turner (2002), Turner (2014), Coulson (2001), etc., with Frame Semantics which views frames as dynamic structures (Barsalou 1992). The foreign language influence on lexical blends and clipped compounds in Bulgarian is here discussed from the point of view of Language Contact theory" (Choroleeva – PhD thesis, 2020: 9). The doctoral candidate summarizes the linguistic research on the topic, compares blend words in English and Bulgarian, and analyzes their structure and their semantics on the basis of Cognitive Linguistics.

The selected research methods are appropriate and allow for the achievement of the scientific goal as well as the formulation of adequate answers to the questions posed. The cognitive linguistic models opted for as a methodological framework in this linguistic study enable the author to arrive at a number of her own conclusions and comparisons as regards the various structural types of blend nouns in English and Bulgarian.

Kornelia Choroleeva's dissertation possesses the traditional structure, the text being well organized.

The introductory part clearly presents the object, the subject, the aims, and the methods of study.

In Chapter One, the doctoral candidate shows that she is well informed on the topic under study: first, she presents the major approaches to the analysis of lexical blending, and then she discusses and analyzes the cognitive framework on the basis of which she comments, classifies, and explains the lexical units. Kornelia Choroleeva takes a critical stance when reviewing the literature and adequately discusses some scientific views.

In the analytical part proper, i.e. Chapter Two, after she substantiates her choice of scientific methodology and explains the theoretical basis of her study, the doctoral candidate presents and classifies the word-formative models of all groups of lexemes under study, analyzes them and compares the respective processes in English and Bulgarian. This part of the dissertation has the greatest scientific contribution because it is the first to propose a detailed analysis of blend nouns in English and Bulgarian by focusing on their morphemic structure and their semantics from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics. The doctoral candidate selects the lexical units under study after specifying the scientific criteria and defining lexical blending, which is also part of her scientific contribution. Her two definitions of lexical blending contribute to the discovery of some solutions concerning the disputable opinions on this word-formation process.

The linguistic corpus also has scientific merit since it contains 1833 English constructions and 361 Bulgarian ones and it has been compiled "on the basis of contemporary sources, which for the most part comprise linguistic material that cannot be discovered in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries" (Choroleeva – doctoral dissertation abstract, 2020: 28). This is a significant number which allows for objective observations and authenticity of the conclusions made.

In the concluding part of the dissertation, Kornelia Choroleeva discusses in detail, once more in the form of classifications, the main aims of the PhD thesis: to determine the foreign language influence on the formation of blend words and clipped compounds in Bulgarian as well as to present the semantics of these nouns in English and Bulgarian using the cognitive linguistic approach.

The diagrams, tables, and statistical data demonstrate the candidate's ability to observe and summarize scientific facts, to treat analytically and deductively theoretical premises, and to synthesize the results from her practical work, which shows her developed scientific skills and maturity in her research.

The well-arranged and logical order of the chapters, the clear formulations, which are not often to be seen in young scientists' work, are some of the good points of the thesis. The candidate discusses the problems in detail, presents all opinions in the scientific literature, and then formulates her own views by grounding them scientifically.

The scientific contributions of the PhD thesis are properly described in the concluding part of the dissertation as well as in the doctoral dissertation abstract.

The candidate has seven publications on the subject of the PhD thesis which show the different stages of her work and manifest an excellent detailed knowledge of the issues under study.

The doctoral dissertation abstract is written in accordance with the requirements and well enough summarizes the chapters of the PhD thesis. It adequately presents the main observations and results formulated in the study. The abstract observes the normative requirements of Plovdiv University and the Faculty of Philology.

Finally, I would like to say that I have known Kornelia Choroleeva for 12 years. She is perseverant and persistent in her work and her personality is outgoing and friendly. I have witnessed her many years of work on the subject, motivated by her interests in English and Bulgarian word formation, especially those concerning disputable or not very popular issues. We have participated together in many scientific fora where she has presented and discussed specific issues related to lexical blending and word formation which are now part of her dissertation. Throughout these years, she has achieved significant scientific growth which she shows in her PhD thesis. Therefore, after acquainting myself in detail with her dissertation, I am convinced that the candidate conducted the research on her own, adequately and competently clarified for herself the theoretical framework, the lexical unit analysis, the results obtained, the formulated scientific contribution, and the two corpora compiled being entirely her own merit.

I suggest she publishes her research so that a wider audience of linguists can read it, which will popularize her ideas and conclusions to a greater extent.

The PhD thesis *contains scientific and scientifically applicable results which constitute an original contribution to science* and **observe all** requirements of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Rules for applying ZRASRB and the corresponding Rules of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The submitted documents and dissertation results correspond **entirely** to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Philology, adopted in accordance with the Rules of Plovdiv University for applying ZRASRB.

The PhD thesis shows that the candidate Kornelia Choroleeva **possesses** detailed theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific area **Germanic languages: English language** by **demonstrating** qualities and skills for conducting independent scientific research.

In view of this statement, I am convinced to give my *positive evaluation* of the conducted research presented by the PhD thesis, the doctoral dissertation abstract, the obtained results and scientific contribution and *I encourage the honorable members of the scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of 'doctor'* to Kornelia Borislavova Choroleeva in the higher education area **2. Humanitarian sciences**, professional area **2.1. Philology**, PhD program **Germanic languages: English language**.

October 11th 2020   **Signature**: ....

                                                                    Assoc. Prof. PhD Petya Nestorova