

## SHORT REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryan Georgiev Yanev

Faculty of Philology, Paisii Hilendarski University

of a dissertation for granting a PhD degree in Area of Higher Education: 2. Humanities,

Professional Field: 2.1. Philology, PhD programme: Germanic Languages: English Language

**Author:** Polina Nikolaeva Petkova

**Topic: Hedging in Academic Writing: Explorations into English and Bulgarian Research Articles**

**Supervisor:** none; independent PhD candidate

By Order No. RD - 21-223/06.02.2023 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to participate in a procedure for the defence of the dissertation on "Hedging in Academic Writing: Explorations into English and Bulgarian Research Articles" a PhD degree in: Area of Higher Education: 2. Humanities, Professional Field: 2.1. Philology, PhD programme: Germanic Languages: English Language. The author of the dissertation is Polina Nikolaeva Petkova, an independent doctoral student at the English Philology Department. All the submitted documents comply with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU. The set of materials submitted by Polina Petkova on electronic media is in full compliance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU.

Polina Petkova also has more than the required number of points in relation to the requirement for holding scientific degrees and academic positions in the Humanities, for the Ph.D. degree, and she has three publications on the topic of the dissertation in specialized journals.

It is clear from the candidate's CV that she is a mature researcher with the necessary philological competence to successfully complete her PhD thesis. Polina Petkova has solid experience as a lecturer in the Department of English Philology and is one of the most distinguished colleagues in the teaching of academic writing in English.

The dissertation, entitled "Hedging in Academic Writing: Explorations into English and Bulgarian Research Articles", is 170 non-standard computer pages long and is skilfully composed of 7 main parts - an introduction with all the necessary introductory features, and

five main chapters and concluding elements (conclusion, bibliography, contributions), accompanied by appendices containing a figurative illustration of the empirical corpus under study.

The evaluated dissertation embodies the idea of a thorough and well-structured study, which is the result of serious research work. It has an innovative and original character as well as a pronounced scientific potential. The aims, objectives, hypotheses and methodology have been formulated successfully and are in line with the subsequent analyses. What is impressive is not only the excellent English language in which Petkova's work is written, but also its presentation in terms of expression, style of exposition and terminological apparatus.

Polina Petkova's study of hedging which belongs to a specific cognitive linguistic area with a pronounced semantic-pragmatic character is highly relevant. In the Bulgarian linguistic tradition, research on the problem is undoubtedly scarce, and Petkova's present work is important for its originality and thoroughness and is completely timely.

Petkova's work has a logical and distinct methodological structure, in which the transition from the general to the specific is evident. The author provides a thorough theoretical overview of the phenomenon of hedging, as she is fully familiar with the history of the issue, and her critical analysis of previous studies is well grounded.

Most revealing of Petkova's work are chapters three, four and five, in which the cogently selected and analysed excerpts from English and Bulgarian academic articles are supported by thorough and revealing qualitative and quantitative descriptions, analysed through Ken Hayland's proposals of polysemantic and polypragmatic nature. In describing the linguistic elements that reveal a hidden and veiled caution that can be identified sometimes only by a well-trained linguist, Petkova also applies some of John Swales's ideas that skilfully fit into her analyses of English and Bulgarian examples. The application of the models to Bulgarian academic discourse is a novelty. Petkova can recognize and discuss very accurately hedging elements with their inherent pragmatic value. Her observations are well illustrated statistically. The conclusions drawn are credible and logical. Chapter six of the dissertation contains an extremely valuable comparative analysis of hedging linguistic elements in the two languages - both with their subcultural specificities and as part of an overall cognitive linguistic phenomena.

The main research sections are comprehensive and analytical in their presentation of information, in which everything is explained in detail and in the author's characteristic style. Viable and in-depth conclusions are made, in which the research results and the research skill of the PhD candidate are clearly visible.

The contributions of the study are described correctly in the abstract of the dissertation, which sufficiently and reliably presents the research conducted. The dissertation contains scientific and applicable results that represent an original contribution to linguistics and meet all the requirements of the Law on Research and Development, the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The doctoral thesis shows that the PhD candidate Polina Petkova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge, demonstrating qualities for independent scientific research as well as for skilful analysis of her own empirical base.

Therefore, I confidently give my positive evaluation for the conducted research, presented in the dissertation, the abstract, the achieved results and contributions, and recommend the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor of Philosophy' to Polina Nikolaeva Petkova in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. English, and I wish the candidate many more creative achievements.

Author of the review:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryan Yanev/

14.03.2023 г.