

PEER REVIEW

by **Prof. Dr. Dimitar Dimitrov Popov – Episkop Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen**

of the materials presented for participation in a competition for occupation of the academic position of **“Associate Professor”** at **Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University** under Higher education field 2. “Humanities,” Professional field 2.1. “Philology: Bulgarian Language (Contemporary Bulgarian Language)”

The only candidate in the competition for occupation of the academic position of **“Associate Professor,”** announced in State Gazette, Issue 32 dated 09.04.2024, and on the website of Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University for the needs of the Bulgarian Language Department in the Faculty of Philology, is **Chief Assistant Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova** from Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

1. General presentation of the submitted materials

By Order No **ПД-21-1383 dated 25.06.2024** of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, I have been appointed as a member of the academic committee for the competition for occupation of the academic position of **“Associate Professor” at Plovdiv University** under Higher education field 2. “Humanities,” Professional field 2.1. “Philology: Bulgarian Language (Contemporary Bulgarian Language),” **announced for the needs of the Bulgarian Language Department in the Faculty of Philology.**

Chief Assistant Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova from Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University is the sole candidate in the competition.

The set of materials presented by Chief Assistant Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova, both in paper and electronic form, **complies with** the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Plovdiv University and includes the following documents: an application form to the Rector, a curriculum vitae, a diploma for the educational qualification degree “Master,” a diploma for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor,” a list of scientific works, a reference for compliance with the minimum national requirements, annotations of the materials for participation in the announced competition and a self-assessment of contributions, a declaration of originality and authenticity of the submitted documents, copies of protocols from the Departmental Council, Faculty Council, and Academic Council in connection with the competition,

the specific issue of the State Gazette with the announcement of the competition, a certificate of work experience, a reference for teaching activities, as well as documents for research work (a certificate of participation in projects, habilitation work, scientific publications in the country and abroad, as well as publications in international editions).

The candidate, Chief Assistant Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova, has submitted a total of 40 scientific works, of which – 24 articles (3 of them abroad), 1 monograph, 1 book (dissertation for obtaining the degree of *Doctor of Philology*), 1 teaching aid in phonetics, and 14 contributions in which she is a co-author in applied scientific editions (test developments). Seven scientific works, which are outside the scope of the dissertation, are accepted for review and counted in the final assessment; 2 teaching aids and 5 research projects. Scientific works related to the dissertation and other scientific works outside the scope of the competition are not reviewed. The distribution of the scientific works by respective categories, in the country and abroad, is as follows – 37 in Bulgaria and 3 abroad. Documents (in the form of official notes) have also been submitted for participation and implemented developments in the field of Bulgarian language education, as well as their usefulness.

It should be noted here that the monograph proposed for review, claimed to be a habilitation work in stylistics, as well as the teaching aid in phonetics, lack information about reviewers and a responsible scientific editor, despite the fact that both books were published by the specialized publishing house for scientific literature of Plovdiv University.

2. Brief biographical data (of the candidate(s))

Bistra Vasileva Dikova was born on 02.09.1962, in Plovdiv. From 01.09.1980 to 31.05.1984, she studied at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, where she graduated with a degree in *Czech Language and Literature* and *Bulgarian Language and Literature*, earning a *Master's degree in Slavic Philology*. She continued her education as a doctoral student at Plovdiv University, where she earned a Ph.D. in Philology after defending her dissertation on the topic: “*Transpositions of Verb Forms in Bulgarian and Czech*” in 2014. From 01.09.1984 to 29.05.1985, Bistra Dikova worked as a teacher of Bulgarian Language and Literature at Ivan Arabadzhiyata Primary School in the village of Tsaratsovo, Plovdiv District. From 30.05.1985 to 31.05.1987, she was a librarian at Ivan Vazov National Library in Plovdiv. Between 01.06.1987 and 17.12.1995, Dikova worked as a Philologist-Specialist in the Bulgarian Language Department at Plovdiv University. From 18.12.1995 to 30.12.1999, she worked as an

Assistant in the same Department, later continuing as a Senior Assistant (01.01.2000 – 30.01.2005), and as a Chief Assistant (31.01.2005 – 14.07.2014).

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Assessment of the educational and pedagogical work and preparation of the candidate

Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova has 37 years of teaching experience at the University. The mandatory lecture courses and seminars she leads are primarily in the areas of **Bulgarian Stylistics, Bulgarian Phonetics, and Bulgarian Lexicology** with students pursuing Bachelor's degrees in programs such as *Bulgarian Philology, Bulgarian and Russian Language, Bulgarian Language and History*, and other hybrid specialties. In the Master's program in the specialty *Bulgarian Language for Non-Specialists*, she teaches **Phonetics and Lexicology**. The teaching aids and tests authored and co-authored by Bistra Dikova assist students in successfully passing exam procedures.

Assessment of the candidate's scientific and applied scientific work

Dr. Bistra Dikova's scientific qualifications and professional interests, as evidenced by her published materials, are mainly in the fields of comparative linguistics (Czech and Bulgarian), stylistics, linguistic expression in literary texts, Bulgarian lexicology, and phonetics (with a focus on phonology). Her book, *“Content Beyond Form” (Plovdiv, Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, 2024, ISBN 978-619-202-956-2)*, dedicated to the linguistic-stylistic analysis of literary texts, is presented as her habilitation work for the announced competition for “Associate Professor.” The book successfully provides a complex stylistic analysis of the emotional and evaluative connotations in selected excerpts from Bulgarian literary works, examining the stylistic potential of units from various linguistic levels. The theoretical attempt made by the author to define frequently used stylistic terms aligns with the classical tradition reflected in textbooks. Illustrative data is presented in detail in three sample linguistic-stylistic analyses of texts from different genres: the poem “Gnoseology” by M. Basheva, the short story “Temptation” by Elin Pelin, and the novella “Old Time Bulgarians” by L. Karavelov. In other publications related to stylistics, various aspects of linguistic phenomena are presented, focusing on more specific questions of the field. However, they align with the candidate's overall concept of the rich connotative variability of Bulgarian literary texts. The bibliography lacks information about the second, updated edition of Dimitar Popov's *Stylistics (Shumen, 2016)*, which presents modern approaches in stylistic science that could enrich Dikova's stylistic perspectives.

In the phonetics textbook presented for review, titled “*Phonetics. Phonology. Speech Culture*” (Plovdiv, 2024, ISBN 978-619-202-966-1), the traditionally established phonological topics are covered. The content follows the well-established knowledge found in authoritative phonetics textbooks, though it lacks new and relevant information in the field, which has been addressed in works by contemporary Bulgarian researchers like Vladimir Zhobov (“*Sounds of the Bulgarian Language*,” Sofia, 2004) and Dimitar Popov (“*Introduction to Speech Science*,” Shumen, 2022).

Contributions (scientific, applied scientific, and practical) and citations

Among the many merits of Dr. Dikova’s work is the systematic use of descriptive and explanatory models of linguistic facts, contributing to the comprehensive presentation of the studied phenomena. She employs an adequate system of operational terms inherited from tradition, along with solid and highly diverse empirical material, although some of it repeats observations made by other authors. The numerous conclusions and generalizations deepen the understanding of the nature of connotations and adhere to traditional classifications when interpreting stylistic phenomena. Common characteristics of her habilitation work and other publications include conscientiousness and systematic representation of complex linguistic phenomena, as well as the author’s deliberate avoidance of random elements in favor of seeking standard and nationally specific characteristics. Her individual publications expand the thematic scope of her publication profile and address important issues in the field of stylistics.

4. Assessment of the personal contributions of the candidate

Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova offers new conceptual insights into several debated linguistic phenomena that lie on the border between morphology and stylistics. She categorizes constructions such as “*will (do something) + present tense*” for expressing assumptions as usages of the present tense, which have yet to be fully grammaticalized. Additionally, she views the use of “*to (do something) + relative form with optative semantics*” to express unachievable or difficult desires as a transposition by taxis. Furthermore, she argues that the so-called *admirative* and *dubitative* usages of reported speech forms are not transpositional. The admirative is seen as a system resulting from the development of the perfect tense, being one of its evolutionary directions, derived from the so-called “perfect-like complex.” Strengthened reported speech forms are interpreted as the result of duplicating the -e morpheme to express dubitateness. Finally, Dr. Dikova has developed an original theory for the linguistic-stylistic analysis of literary texts.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

1. I do not fully agree with the categorical statement made by the candidate in the announced competition, as evidenced at the very beginning of her habilitation work, that “*Linguistic-stylistic analysis is a method for studying the linguistic organization of a text, the functioning of linguistic units, and the relationships between them*” (p. 7). This interpretation seems inaccurate and lacks sufficient argumentation. In linguistics, it is recommended to differentiate between the concepts of *methodology* and *methods* of scientific research

2. The use of the term “*emphasia*” (p. 146) in the habilitation work is incorrect; the proper term is “*emphasis*,” which is borrowed from prosody.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Bistra Vasileva Dikova generally **meet all** the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations for the application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the relevant regulations of Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

The candidate has presented a **sufficient** number of scientific works published after her doctoral defense. Her works contain original scientific and applied contributions, some of which have received international recognition and have been published in journals and scientific collections by international academic publishers. Her theoretical contributions have practical applicability, with some being directly oriented towards teaching. Dr. Bistra Dikova’s scientific and pedagogical qualifications are **unquestionable**.

The results achieved by Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova in both her teaching and research activities **fully meet** the national minimum and additional requirements of the Faculty of Philology, as outlined in the regulations of Plovdiv University for the application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works submitted for the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, applied, and practical contributions contained within, I find it justified to give my **positive** assessment and recommend to the Scientific Jury to submit a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philology for the election of Dr. Bistra Vasileva Dikova to the academic position of “Associate Professor” at Plovdiv Uni-

versity under Higher education field 2. “Humanities,” Professional field 2.1. “Philology: Bulgarian Language (Contemporary Bulgarian Language).

08.09.2024

Reviewed by:

Prof. Dr. Dimitar Popov