

# REVIEW

by the competition for the **Associate Professor** in Professional Field 2.1 academic position.

Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language) – for the needs of the Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in Smolyan, according to the announcement in the State Gazette No. 98/19.11.2024

## **Candidate:**

Senior Assistant Professor Miroslav Krasimirov Mihaylov, PhD,  
Department of Pedagogical, Humanitarian, Economic, and Natural-Mathematical Sciences  
Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv – Smolyan

## **Reviewer:**

Associate Professor Boryan Georgiev Yanev, PhD,  
Department of General Linguistics and History of the Bulgarian Language  
Faculty of Philology, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

According to order no. RD-22-73 dated 17.01.2025 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I have been appointed as a member of the academic jury for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the city of Smolyan, in the field of Humanities, Professional Field 2.1. Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language), announced for the needs of the aforementioned unit of the university.

By order No. RD-22-73 dated 17.01.2025 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in a competition for the appointment of the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the city of Smolyan, in the field of Humanities, Professional Field 2.1. Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language), announced for the needs of the unit of the university.

The only person who has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition is Miroslav Krasimirov Mihaylov, PhD, Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of Pedagogical, Humanitarian, Economic, and Natural-Mathematical Sciences at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv – Smolyan.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBMITTED MATERIALS

The materials submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Miroslav Mihaylov, PhD, on an electronic medium fully comply with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The candidate Mihaylov has submitted a total of 34 scientific works for participation in the announced competition. I accept all submitted materials for review, as none of them overlap with a previous procedure for his scientific or academic advancement.

Regarding the types of publications, the submitted materials include two monographs: *The Dialect of the Village of Pripek* (Plovdiv, 2022, University Publishing House "Paisii Hilendarski", ISBN 978-619-202-759-9), and *Phonetics of the Contemporary Bulgarian Literary Language (with a Focus on Dialectal Conditions)* (Published by Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Branch – Smolyan, ISBN 978-954-8767-70-5).

Additionally, there are two books: *The Zlatograd Dialect* (Smolyan, 2016, 324 pages, ISBN 978-954-8767-64-4), which is based on his doctoral dissertation on the same topic, and *Settlement Names in the Smolyan Region* (Smolyan, 2015, 172 pages, ISBN 978-954-92513-8-8), in which he is a co-author.

One dictionary has been submitted: *Frequency Dictionary of Personal Names in the Smolyan Region* (co-authored, Smolyan, 2010, ISBN 978-954-9358-43-8).

Two studies: *Acoustic Aspects of Vowels in the Dialect of the Village of Pripek* – in the collection *Interdisciplinary Aspects of the Relationship Between Man and Society* (University Publishing House "Paisii Hilendarski", ISBN 978-619-202-627-1, Plovdiv, 2021, pp. 70–104), and *Ethnopsycholinguistic Aspects of Intercultural Education* – in *Intercultural Education* (Plovdiv University Publishing House, Plovdiv, 2024, ISBN 978-619-7768-07-07, pp. 106–133, co-authored).

He has also submitted twenty-six scientific articles, authored alone or co-authored, published in national and international specialized journals.

## ASSESSMENT OF PUBLICATIONS AFTER OBTAINING THE DOCTORAL DEGREE

After obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor," the publication activity of Senior Assistant Professor Miroslav Mihaylov, PhD, has increased significantly. The number of scientific works has grown substantially, exceeding 30. Before obtaining the "Doctor" degree, Mihaylov's publications mainly focused on dialectology. However, at the time of the current

procedure, a significant expansion of his research scope can be observed (e.g., into fields such as onomastics, experimental phonetics, intercultural education, mathematical linguistics, didactics, etc.), which is one of the necessary prerequisites for qualitative academic growth.

### **SCIENTOMETRIC INDICATORS**

Regarding this criterion, Senior Assistant Professor Miroslav Mihaylov has excellent scientometric indicators related to specialized monographs and articles, as well as correctly recorded citations.

The candidate exceeds the required minimum points for an Associate Professor according to the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria in Professional Field 2.1. Humanities. The scientometric indicators are presented in detail and accurately in the specialized reports attached to the candidate's documentation regarding the minimum requirements, publications, and citations.

### **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CANDIDATE'S SCIENTIFIC, APPLIED SCIENTIFIC, AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

At this point, it should be noted that Miroslav Mihaylov possesses exceptional communication and organizational skills, resulting from his numerous participations in various initiatives of the Branch and the University, both in academic circles and in public science outreach.

The candidate is a recognizable figure in philological scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad, particularly those focused on dialectology and experimental phonetics.

For the academic year 2024/2025, Mihaylov has 750 actual teaching hours at the Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in Smolyan. He delivers lectures and practical exercises in mandatory, elective, and optional courses such as *Contemporary Bulgarian Language and Practical Grammar*, *Methodology of Bulgarian Language Teaching*, and *Current Pedagogical Practice* in pedagogical majors.

He also teaches *Introduction to General Linguistics ((exercises)*, *History of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language*, *Phonetics of the Contemporary Bulgarian Language (lectures and exercises)*, and *Lexicology of the Contemporary Bulgarian Language (exercises)* in Philology programs at the Branch.

Additionally, he teaches elective and optional courses such as *Acoustic Aspects of Conversational Speech*, *Linguistic Culture*, *Linguistic Culture and Business Correspondence*, *Bulgarian Dialectology*, and *Experimental Methods in Phonetics*.

Miroslav Mihaylov has led or participated as a team member in 15 intra-university, national, and international scientific projects, including: *Digital Internet-Based Library for Rhodope Dialects (with Audio Applications)*, *Interactive Linguistic Map of the Rhodopes (in Acoustic Aspects)*, *Center and Network for Intercultural Dialogue and Education (NIDE)*, *Support for Success* (under the Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth"), among others.

The candidate has supervised 15 graduate students who successfully defended their theses in fields such as phonetics, dialectology, language history, and contemporary trends in education.

## **MAIN SCIENTIFIC AND APPLIED SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS**

The monograph *The Dialect of the Village of Pripek*, submitted for review, offers a comprehensive description of the sounds in the dialect system of the Bulgarian language, with particular attention given to the characteristics of its vowel system. The phonetic features of the dialect of Pripek are described in detail, with special emphasis on one of its most distinctive characteristics – the narrowing of the vowel /e/ under stress, accompanied by a reduction in its duration.

The monograph also thoroughly and argumentatively examines the so-called "replacement of the vowel [è] with the vowel [ù] under stress." Mihaylov's analysis shows that this change is facultative, which challenges the assertion that the dialect of Pripek overlaps with the Paulician dialects in the Plovdiv region. To conduct an acoustic analysis of the cases where the vowel [è] is replaced by [ù] under stress, modern acoustic analysis software was used, providing the necessary objectivity to the conclusions.

Mihaylov's study also contains information on the morphology and syntax of the linguistic phenomenon under investigation, describing grammatical categories such as voice, transitivity of verbs, mood (including evidential forms), types of phrases, types of subordinate relations, and sentence structures based on their communicative function and syntactic structure. All findings are supported by the necessary dialect material.

The observations were made based on language material collected personally. The monograph includes a rich bibliography and a large corpus of dialect texts.

The monograph *Phonetics of the Contemporary Bulgarian Literary Language (with a Focus on Dialectal Conditions)* presents a general overview of Bulgarian phonetics concerning the literary language while also addressing dialectal phonetic features. The author examines all key theoretical concepts that form the foundation of phonetics and phonology education, drawing

on the ideas of one of the most prominent contemporary linguists in the field of phonology – Count Nikolai Sergejevich Trubetzkoy.

The monograph includes essential sections such as the structure of the speech apparatus, acoustic and articulatory characteristics of speech sounds, classifications, and more. A special focus is placed on the historical development of the phoneme system, as well as its modern structure in terms of phonological features and oppositions. The sonorant consonants and the glide Ъ /j/ are also analyzed. Particular attention is given to the topic of palatal correlation in contemporary Bulgarian, leading to the conclusion that the phonological opposition between palatal and non-palatal sounds has undergone significant changes over the past few decades, resulting in the "decomposition of the softness of palatal consonants." The phonemic alternations in the language are comprehensively and expertly presented, comparing dialectal and literary spoken language features.

Mihaylov's study is not only of a contributory nature but also serves as an exemplary educational resource in Bulgarian phonetics.

Since *The Zlatograd Dialect* (Smolyan, 2016) was previously reviewed during Mihaylov's doctoral qualification process, it can be summarized as a scientifically significant work with undeniable contributions. The dissertation, published and revised as a book, contains an extensive body of material that sufficiently covers the phonetics and grammar of the Zlatograd dialect and its linguistic features – an area that was relatively under-researched despite prior studies.

The book *Settlement Names in the Smolyan Region* (Smolyan, 2015) is a study of the entire corpus of place names in the municipalities of Smolyan, Madan, and Rudozem within the Smolyan region, with the participation of researchers specializing in Rhodope onomastics. Candidate Miroslav Krasimirov Mihaylov is the author of Chapter 1.2.4. *Semantic Classification of Old Turkish Settlement Names* (pp. 32–44) and Chapter 2.1.2. *Dictionary of Settlement Names in the Municipality of Smolyan* (pp. 73–114). The study is based on archival documents dating back to 1676, officially recorded name changes in various directories and lists, field studies, and data obtained from living informants. Since I have previously expressed an opinion on this book in another academic procedure, I will reiterate my stance that this is another significant contribution to the field of toponymy.

The *Frequency Dictionary of Personal Names in the Smolyan Region*, included in the candidate's documents, is the first of its kind, presenting the frequency of 4,228 personal names in the geographical and administrative area of Smolyan over a century. Each anthroponym is accompanied by information on its frequency by municipality and decade. This allows for

objective comparisons and analyses between the Smolyan anthroponymic system and others within the country. The examined period and extracted material are sufficiently representative to illustrate the evolution of the personal name system in Smolyan.

The names of 66,328 children born over the past century were analyzed. The extracted material comes from birth registers (alphabetical indices) of the following municipalities: Smolyan (1914–2009), Devin (1915–2008), Chepelare (1913–1994), and Nedelino (1915–1986). The dictionary analyzes 4,228 anthroponyms. This study is of exceptional contribution to onomastics, particularly anthroponymy. Previous comments I have made regarding the dictionary concern the use of terms such as the "semantics" of personal names, certain inaccuracies in the determination of name origins, and other minor issues.

I will briefly comment on the studies submitted for review, as they highlight the research expertise of the candidate, Miroslav Mihaylov.

The study *Acoustic Aspects of Vowels in the Speech of the Village of Pripek* stands out with the following important conclusions for field linguistics, which the author has precisely outlined:

1. After analyzing spectrograms of vowel variants [à], [³], [è], [ù], [ò], [²] in the speech of the village of Pripek, it was found that the formant values of narrow and wide vowel pairs are quite close. The first formant values for the pair [à] – [³] range between 800–900 Hz. The first formant values for the vowel pair [è] – [ù] vary from 430 to 759 Hz.
2. Mihaylov proves that the wide vowel in each correlative pair necessarily has a longer duration. The reduction of vowels is more related to the decrease in their intensity and duration rather than a change in their formant parameters.
3. In this study, Mihaylov applies the most modern methods of experimental acoustic analysis, making numerous contributions to Bulgarian phonetics.

In the study *Ethno-Psycholinguistic Aspects of Intercultural Education*, the argument is convincingly made that contemporary intercultural education, in the context of economic development in the European Union, is of significant importance. "Achieving 'mobility' in the functioning of 'small' and 'large' languages would contribute to mutual and multifaceted cultural exchange. Language learning is also important for guiding integration processes related to migration."

These facts confirm the necessity for young people to develop skills for recognizing their native language as an essential means of understanding their surrounding social environment and integrating into it. The authors further state that "this predetermines the psycholinguistic

characteristics of language learning, which require observing the models of language interaction among students in a specific ethnocultural environment and adapting teaching strategies per the established specifics of speech and cognitive function."

Also of particular significance are the submitted publications for evaluation in the already mentioned fields of Mihaylov's research interests. I will highlight several publications, some of which are co-authored, that present foundational theoretical-pragmatic models: *Word-Formation Models in the Anthroponymic System of the Smolyan Region* – in: *Man and the Universe*, Proceedings. Smolyan, 2011, pp. 50–56, ISBN: 978-954-397-025-4; *The Vowel Shift è > ù in Eastern Rhodope Dialects as Evidence of Migration Processes* – in: *Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Smolyan, Scientific Papers, Volume 1, 2013*, ISSN: 1314-9490; *Semantic Classification of Oikonyms from Madan and Rudozem Municipalities* – in: *Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Smolyan, Scientific Papers, Volume 1, 2013*, ISSN: 1314-9490, Proceedings. Smolyan, 2013, pp. 30–35; *Modern Mathematical Methods for Describing Speech Sound* – in: *Scientific Papers of the Union of Scientists – Plovdiv, Series B. Natural and Humanitarian Sciences, Volume XVI*, Proceedings. Plovdiv, 2014, pp. 133–137, ISSN: 1311-9192; *Spectral Representation of Palatal Consonants in the Contemporary Bulgarian Literary Language* – in: *Scientific Papers of the Union of Scientists Plovdiv, Series A: Social Sciences, Arts, and Culture, Volume VI*, Plovdiv, 2020, pp. 187–191, ISSN: 1311-9400; *Sound Analysis of Speech Using Fourier Transform* – in: *Scientific Papers of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Series B. Technology and Engineering, Volume XIX*, ISSN: 1311-9419 (PRINT), ISSN: 2534-9384; *Mechanisms for Automatic Speech Recognition Using Spectrograms* – in: *Scientific Papers of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Series B. Technology and Engineering, Volume XIX*, ISSN: 1311-9419; *Formant Transitions in the Spectral Representation of Speech* – in: *Scientific Papers of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Series B. Technology and Engineering, Volume XX*, ISSN: 1311-9419 (PRINT), ISSN: 2534-9384; *Slavic Anthroponymy in the Smolyan Region* – in: *Zeszyty Cyrylo-Metodiańskie, 4/2015*, pp. 97–106, ISSN: 2449-8297; *Semantic Classification of the Turkish Names of Villages from the Smolyan Region* – in: *9th International Balkan Education and Science Congress, 16–18 October 2014 / Edirne*, pp. 1327–1333.

## CONCLUSION

I have known Miroslav Mihaylov as a colleague and researcher for years. I am firmly convinced that he is a valuable and recognizable linguist with a distinct research niche. Mihaylov is a responsible colleague, positively inclined toward work and his peers, and respected by

students, making him a sought-after collaborator in various initiatives at both branch and university levels. I have witnessed his efforts to ensure that the Smolyan Branch of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv attracts the necessary students who will be satisfied with their education.

The documents and materials submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Krasimirov Mihaylov, PhD, meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the respective regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. A significant number of scientific works have been presented, and published after those used in the defense of his doctoral dissertation and appointment as a Senior Assistant Professor. His works contain original scientific and applied contributions, which have received the necessary recognition from specialists.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works submitted for the competition, analyzing their significance, and considering the scientific, applied, and practical contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable **to give my positive assessment** and recommend that the Academic Jury appoint Miroslav Mihaylov to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Field 2.1. Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language).

**15.03.2025**

**Reviewer:**

*(Assoc. Prof. Boryan Yanev, PhD)*