

OPINION

by **Dr. Lachezar Lyubenov Perchekliyski** –

**Associate Professor at the South-West University “Neofit Rilski” – Blagoevgrad,
on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of
“Associate Professor” at the Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (Branch – Smolyan) in the
field of higher education 2. *Humanities*, professional field 2.1. *Philology*,
scientific specialty *Modern Bulgarian Language***

The competition for *associate professor* was announced in the State Gazette (issue 98 of 19.11.2024) and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) for the needs of the Smolyan Branch. The scientific jury was appointed by Order No. PD-22-73 of 17.01.2025 of the Rector of PU.

Only **Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Miroslav Krasimirov Mihaylov**, who is employed full-time at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (Branch - Smolyan), has submitted documents to participate in the announced competition.

The set of materials submitted by the candidate on an electronic device is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff (RDAS) of the University of Plovdiv and includes the following important documents: 1) Order of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv to appoint the members of the scientific jury, 2) a certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements, 3) a professional CV according to the Europass CV format, 4) an annotation of the materials under Art. 65 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Plovdiv University (RDASPU), including a self-assessment of the contributions (in Bulgarian and English), 5) a certificate of scientific work, 6) a list of scientific works and 7) diplomas for completed higher education and obtained doctoral degree.

To the above-mentioned documents for participation in the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Miroslav Mihaylov has attached in electronic form a total of 33 scientific works related to the competition (4 of them have been published abroad), 2 monographs, 2 books (one is co-authored, the other is based on the doctoral dissertation), 1 dictionary (co-authored), 2 research studies and 26 scientific papers (15 of which are co-authored). The subject matter that Dr. Mihaylov explores in his works is also broad: Bulgarian dialectology, phonetics and phonology of the Bulgarian language analyzed synchronically and diachronically, lexicology, onomastics (toponymy and anthroponymy), ethno- and psycholinguistics, and methodology of teaching the Bulgarian language.

In 2006 Miroslav Mihailov defended his doctoral dissertation before the National Academy of Sciences in Linguistics and the HAC (Higher Attestation Commission) awarded him the Doctoral

degree in the scientific specialty 05.04.17 "Bulgarian Language". The topic of the dissertation was "The Zlatograd dialect". The research was published in 2016.

Miroslav Mihaylov has many years of teaching experience. The candidate has been teaching at PU (Branch - Smolyan) since 2001, holding successively the positions of "Assistant Professor" (2001 - 2003), "Senior Assistant Professor" (2003 - 2007) and "Chief Assistant Professor" (2007 – up to present). The record of his teaching experience shows that so far Dr Mihailov has taught courses in Modern Bulgarian language (Phonetics and Lexicology), Practical grammar, History of the Bulgarian language, History of the New Bulgarian literary language, Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature, Introduction to general linguistics, Bulgarian dialectology, Language culture, etc. He has been a scientific supervisor of 15 graduates, who successfully defended their Diploma papers, he has participated in 18 scientific projects (1 international, 6 national and 11 intra-university), he has presented papers in 10 scientific conferences, he has lectured in three foreign universities, and he is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the International Sociolinguistic Society.

The main habilitation work, with which Dr Mihailov participated in the competition, is the monograph *The Dialect of the Village of Pripek* (Plovdiv: University of Economics "Paisii Hilendarski", 2022, 176 pp., ISBN 978-619-202-759-9). In it, the author presents a description of an interesting East Rup dialect with its phonetic peculiarities, which is surrounded on all sides by settlements with Turkish-speaking population. Mihaylov's main goal is to show the picture of the contemporary state of the Pripek dialect. In presenting the dialect, the descriptive method is leading. The structure of the investigation follows the generally accepted guidelines for the description of a dialect. First, the phonetic and phonological features are examined, followed by a description of the morphological system by parts of speech, and at the end is the syntax. After the main part of the book, transcribed samples of the dialect are indicated.

In the study, the main emphasis falls on the phonetic side of the dialect, in which, without a doubt, the vocal system is more interesting. This is understandable because: 1) phonetic features determine the main differences between the individual Bulgarian dialects, 2) Miroslav Mihaylov is a specialist in Phonetics and Phonology and this topic occupies a significant place in his scientific production. Less attention is paid to morphology and syntax in the book, but the work does not lose its significance because the author has managed to present both the main morphological and syntactic features that determine the belonging of the dialect to the Bulgarian language and the more specific features that characterize most of the Rhodope dialects.

For the dialect of the village of Pripek there are several new publications from the 1980s to the present day (Savova 1981, Mitrinov 1987, 2010, Toncheva, Iliev 2016, etc.) that present short or more comprehensive descriptions of the dialect. Miroslav Mihailov's work reiterates the basic

linguistic facts that are presented in these works, but also deepens the knowledge of the dialect by using modern technologies to investigate the acoustic aspect of vowels in Pripek dialect. The results are illustrated by spectrograms that represent the characteristics of the vocals and their allophones. Nowadays, among the Eastern Rhodope dialects, only the dialect of the village of Pripek shows the phonetic change $\text{è} > \text{й}$, which is not a reduction, but a narrowing of the vowel [e] under stress, which is accompanied by a simultaneous shortening of its duration. The acoustic analysis further reveals that “the broad vowel of each correlative pair is necessarily of longer duration. The reduction of the vocals is related more to the reduction of their intensity and duration than to a change in their formant parameters” (p. 79).

The overall assessment of Miroslav Mihaylov's habilitation thesis is positive. The author has coped with the task of presenting the phonetic and grammatical peculiarities of the speech of the village of Pripek (Zlatograd region), illustrating the various linguistic features with appropriate examples from his personally collected dialect material. The book is a contribution to Bulgarian dialectology because it characterizes a Bulgarian Rhodope dialect about which some inaccurate assumptions have been made in the past. The reasoning in the Conclusion (pp. 140-142) accurately reflects the most salient diagnostic features of the dialect under study. The bibliographical list includes a total of 101 titles by authors who have some close or more distant connection with the topic.

Along with all the positive things said so far, I would like to make a few critical remarks:

1. In proofreading before printing the monograph, not all technical inaccuracies were cleared up, for example: *характерен и за съвременния български език* / *българския език* (pp. 24 – 25).

2. On p. 88 the plural endings of polysyllabic nouns are given, but probably due to an oversight about the ending -'ъ an example with a verb is also given: *измъчѣйѣ* (*а̀с до̀йдохѣ та ма пуйѣхѣ и дука̀раѣ ма бѐз да зна̀м / измъчѣйѣ мѣ ѣѣтѣ ма измъчѣйѣ*).

3. On p. 95, among the examples of plural forms inflected by a definite article for general definiteness, an example of a singular form is given: *инса̀нѣт* (*инва̀ гу са̀ видѣвали инса̀нѣт*).

4. The word *искѣтен* is given as an example of an adjective, but in my opinion it is a past participle of the verb *искѣтя* ‘отгледам, отхраня’ (‘to bring up, nourish’) (p. 95).

5. The work of G. Mitrinov, which was published in 1987, is included twice in the Bibliography.

The indicated inaccuracies are not of significant importance because they were made due to oversight and can be eliminated in a possible second edition of the book.

Miroslav Mihaylov also participated in the competition with the monograph “Phonetics of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language (With Regard to the Dialect State)” (Smolyan, 2018, 160 pp., ISBN: 978-954-8767-70-5). The book is a textbook that examines the contemporary state of

Bulgarian phonetics and phonology. An overview of the authors and published works on the topic is given. The phonetic features of the literary language are examined in comparison with the dialectal phonetic features.

Miroslav Mihailov's works (monographs, research studies and scientific papers) are distinguished by analytical and precise presentation of linguistic facts. The author skillfully uses the stylistic features of the Bulgarian literary language. The terminology is precise and clear and the citations are correct. There are no other people's ideas that Mihailov has presented as his own. The importance of the problems addressed in the scientific publications is confirmed by the attached author's reference to the citations (21 citations in total, 3 of which are in foreign journals).

The documents and materials submitted by Dr. Miroslav Mihaylov meet all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ASDA and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University. The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works not including the materials related to the defense of the dissertation. The candidate's works contain original contributions which have received scientific recognition.

After reading the materials and scientific works submitted in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific contributions contained in them, I find it justified to give my **positive assessment** and to recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report with a proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philology for the election of Dr. Miroslav Krasimirov Mihailov to the academic position of Associate Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (Branch - Smolyan) in the professional field *2.1. Philology (Contemporary Bulgarian Language)*.

15th March, 2025

Blagoevgrad

Written and signed by:

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lachezar Perchekliyski /