

STATEMENT

by **Assoc. Prof. Lilia Dragomirova Ivanova, PhD**

Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Languages

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in:

field of higher education **2. Humanities**

professional field **2.1. Philology**

PhD programme *Romance languages*

Autor: **Polina Georgieva Tabakova**

Topic: *The meaning of Anteriority, in the modern Spanish Indicative through the prism of the comparison with the Bulgarian language*

Scientific supervisors: **Assoc. Prof. Veselka Nenkova, PhD** and **Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Chakarova, PhD** – Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

1. General overview of the submitted materials

By Order No. PД-21-2054 of 15.11.2024 of the Rector of 'Paisii Hilendarski' University of Plovdiv, I have been appointed as a member of the Academic Board of Examiners in the procedure for the defense of a dissertation on 'The Meaning of Anteriority in the Indicative of Modern Spanish through the Prism of Comparison with the Bulgarian Language' submitted for the award of the higher education and academic degree of 'Doctor' in the field of Higher Education 2. Humanities; Professional Field 2.1. Philology; Doctoral Programme in Romance Languages. The author of the dissertation is **Polina Georgieva Tabakova** - a PhD student in the Department of Romance and German Languages whose scientific supervisors are **Assoc. Prof. Veselka Nenkova, PhD** and **Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Chakarova, PhD** from the Faculty of Philology of 'Paisii Hilendarski' University of Plovdiv.

The electronic set of materials submitted by Polina Tabakova is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv and includes all documents required for the procedure.

Polina Tabakova completed her secondary education at the Ivan Vazov Language High School with studies in two foreign languages – Spanish and Russian. In 2017, she completed a bachelor's degree in the specialty "Bulgarian and Spanish", followed by a master's degree in applied linguistics at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, completed in 2018. In the meantime, she has worked for short periods as a translator and Spanish teacher. Since 2017, she has been teaching Spanish at the "St. Patriarch Evtimii" Secondary School. From 2021 to 2024, she is a full-time doctoral student at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Impressive are the excellent foreign language skills in Spanish, English and Russian, the professional development courses, and also the overall activity of Polina Tabakova, who has consistently and systematically worked on her education, during which time she has won many awards and expanded her competencies, while simultaneously gaining professional experience related to the field of graduate education, developing personal qualities and skills in various fields.

2. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the goals and objectives

The topic of the dissertation is both relevant, since verb problems are one of the most extensive and interesting problems in the morphological systems of both languages, and complex to develop, since the discussion questions related to it abound. In this regard, it can be said that the doctoral student has set herself the difficult task of writing on issues that significant linguists in the field of both Bulgarian and Spanish have worked on. At the same time, the antecedent has not been independently developed in such a broad aspect comparatively between the two languages, which further predetermines the relevance of the topic. The object and subject of the study, the goals and tasks are precisely defined. The relevance of the problem is also determined by the practical and applied aspect that the results of the study would have in the education of pupils, students and philology students, as well as in the work of translators.

3. Knowledge of the problem

Given the rich literature on verb problems, the author's awareness, solid theoretical background and analytical skills related to the generalization of concepts are impressive. Good understanding of the problem is evident from the clear discussion of the terminology, from the

abundance of literature - mainly in Bulgarian and Spanish, but also in other languages, as well as from the ability to analyze the concepts available in linguistics on the issues under consideration.

4. Research methodology

The theoretical basis of the study is based on the ideas of functional structuralism, applying the functional-semantic approach laid down in the works of A. V. Bondarko. The work also uses the comparative method, the empirical method and the excerpt method. The combination of methods allows the potential of the study to be unleashed.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The dissertation work presented for discussion covers 242 pages, structured in an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and excerpted sources. 234 sources in Bulgarian, Spanish, English, Russian and German are cited, which testifies to the excellent bibliographical awareness of the author (122 titles in Latin and 112 in Cyrillic). 29 sources from Spanish fiction are excerpted, most of which are translated into Bulgarian, with electronic sources of various nature added, as well as 4 sources from Bulgarian fiction, summarized in 347 examples.

In the introduction (pp. 4 – 13), doctoral student Polina Tabakova indicates as the object of her research the indicative active verb forms from the temporal system of the verb in the Spanish language and the inexpressible indicative active verb forms in the Bulgarian language, which are used to express past events. The aim is to compare the two temporal systems with an emphasis on the semantics of the meaning of precedence. Some theories of time and its various aspects are examined. The object, purpose, tasks, theoretical basis, research methods and composition of the text are correctly presented, and the parameters of the research are specified. To fulfill the set goal, six tasks have been defined to be carried out within the framework of the research.

The first chapter (pp. 14 – 110) presents the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. The theoretical basis of the dissertation work is the functional structuralism and the functional-semantic approach, applied and developed for the first time in the works of A. V. Bondarko, and for the Bulgarian language associated mostly with the research of Iv. Kutsarov. The terminological apparatus is presented in detail and specified in view of the stated starting positions.

In the dissertation, P. Tabakova proceeds from the view that the so-called temporal system in the Spanish language is formed by the interacting morphological categories of verb tense, plan and perfect (complex) verb forms, while the temporal system in the Bulgarian language is formed by the morphological category of verb tense, MC plan (taxis) and MC of the perfect. Despite the apparent formal-semantic similarities, attention is also paid to the differences in the functioning of the temporal systems and simultaneously to the symmetry and asymmetry in terms of the categorial organization between the two compared languages, as the differences are skillfully overcome and a basis is found for the comparative analysis. Temporal relations in the study are perceived according to the concepts of Eugenio Coseriu for the Spanish language and Ivan Kutsarov for the Bulgarian language.

The available theories on the issues related to the considered verb categories are skillfully analyzed. At the same time, not only an analytical approach is noticeable, expressed in a correct and at the same time quite detailed presentation of the scientific literature on the problem, but also a clear statement of a position on each of the problems presented as relevant for the study, by adding new points of view to existing linguistic problems.

The good understanding of the considered issues both in their entirety and in detail is also proven by the summarization of a several propositions in illustrative diagrams.

The problem of the coordination of verb forms in the Spanish and Bulgarian sentences is also addressed, and questions are raised that have the potential to be studied in the future.

Another positive aspect of the work is that each chapter is accompanied by clear and well-structured conclusions, in which the main emphasis is, both the cases of symmetry and asymmetry between the two languages.

Chapter Two (pp. 111 – 165) is devoted to the realization of precedence and its connections with other grammatical meanings within the verb, through which a narrative of past events is built in the Spanish and Bulgarian languages.

Characteristic of both the entire work and this chapter is the logical sequence and orderliness in the presentation of the verb forms under consideration. P. Tabakova shows her skills in both referring to authoritative research in the field, but also in offering a critical analysis of the different points of view, as well as in taking a position on each of the issues under consideration.

The inclusion of not only the grammemes marked with precedence (A and *cantara₁*), but also perfect, imperfect, plusquamperfect, futurum preteriti, futurum exactum and futurum exactum

preteriti within the limits of the issues under consideration is justified. The conclusions regarding the systemic meanings of the presented forms, which are reached as a result of the analyzed material (pp. 163 – 165), are significant.

In the third chapter of the study (pp. 166 – 215), the Bulgarian translation equivalents of the Spanish verb forms, tied to the antecedent, are presented. The practical and applied contribution is particularly prominent here, since the results of these observations could be used for the purposes of both training and translation. A large volume of excerpted material has been analyzed, and the conclusions and inferences made are semantically tied to the statements presented in the previous chapters, but new nuances are also added with a view to translation correspondences. The balance between examples and theoretical notes has been relatively well maintained. This chapter also observes the clear structure and orderliness characteristic of the entire work.

A conclusion follows, which briefly summarizes the results of the conducted research and outlines the formulated contributions.

The attached **bibliography** further proves Polina Tabakova's broad linguistic interests and selection skills, as well as her solid theoretical background.

6. Assessment of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student

Polina Tabakova has presented seven publications in Bulgarian on the topic of the dissertation, with which she previously presented some of her developments at various scientific forums to a scientific audience - at international conferences in Bulgaria and at national conferences for students and PhD students. The publications are comparative between Bulgarian and Spanish and their results are described in the dissertation.

Polina Tabakova's dissertation is one of a well-prepared young linguist who demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the researched subject. The author treats the scientific tradition in the field of her interests with responsibility, showing skills in working with scientific research in different languages, the ability to systematize and analyze linguistic phenomena with the application of a personal assessment of the facts. The excellent ability to work with excerpted sources is also noteworthy. The dissertation represents the first comparative study of the meaning of precedence between Bulgarian and Spanish on such a scale.

7. Abstract

The abstract in a volume of 32 pages (in a Bulgarian version, and also offered in Spanish) accurately and fully conveys the content of the dissertation work, correctly summarizing the most essential moments of the text. It contains the clear and orderly composition of the study itself. The object, goal and tasks are clearly highlighted, and the contributing moments, which are brought out as a separate part, are presented objectively. The quintessence of each chapter is adequately presented. The bibliography is precisely crafted.

8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

The dissertation can be used as a starting point for further studies of the verb system in a comparative plan between Bulgarian and Spanish. It contains valuable theoretical information summarizing essential points from the analysis of the linguistic phenomena under consideration, and the results of the comparisons made regarding the semantics and function of the forms expressing precedence can be used for the purposes of teaching and translating. In view of these arguments, I would welcome the publication of the dissertation as a monograph.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I could summarize that the presented dissertation represents a well-thought-out, structured and completed scientific research with scientific and applied results and meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADAB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADAB and the relevant regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University. The set goals and objectives have been successfully fulfilled, and the conclusions are well-reasoned. The scientific statement throughout the study testifies to the linguistic maturity of the author of the text. The scientific facts are not only described, but also analyzed and commented on adequately.

The dissertation shows that the PhD student possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge in the field of Spanish and Bulgarian grammar, demonstrating qualities and abilities for independent scientific research.

Due to the stated opinion, I confidently **give my positive assessment** of the conducted research, presented by the dissertation work on the topic: "The meaning of *Anteriority* in the indicative of the modern Spanish language through the prism of comparison with the Bulgarian language", the abstract, the achieved results and contributions, and I recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award **Polina Georgieva Tabakova** the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**" in

the field of higher education **2. Humanities**, professional field **2.1. Philology**, doctoral program
Romance Languages.

04/02/2025

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