

STATEMENT

by **Assoc. Prof. Vesela Petrova Chergova, PhD - Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski,
Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Department of Portuguese and Lusophone Studies**

(n.s., first name, surname, last name - academic degree. Ph.D. in the university or scientific organization)

on the dissertation for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree

On Higher Education and Research Area: 2. Humanities
Professional field: 2.1. Philology
PhD Programme: Romance Languages

Author: **POLINA TABAKOVA**

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

PhD Scientific Advisors: Assoc. Prof. Veselka Nenkova, PhD - Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Philology, Department of Romance and German Studies

Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Chakarova, PhD - Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Philology, Department of Contemporary Bulgarian Language

(academic degree, Ph.D., first name, surname, last name - university or scientific organization)

1. General description of the materials submitted and the procedure

By Order No. RD-21-2054 of 15.11.2024 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv I have been selected and appointed as a member of the scientific jury, which will conduct the procedure for the defense of the dissertation of PhD student Polina Tabakova on the subject “The meaning of *Anteriority* in the modern Spanish Indicative through the prism of the comparison with the Bulgarian language” for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree on Higher Education and Research Area 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.1. Philology, PhD Programme of Romance Languages. Polina Tabakova is a PhD student in a full-time terms at the Department of Romance and German Studies with the PhD Scientific Advisors as follows: Assoc. Prof. Veselka Nenkova, PhD (Department of Romance and German Studies) and Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Chakarova, PhD

(Department of Contemporary Bulgarian Language), both members of the Faculty of Philology, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

I received the set of PhD defense documents electronically and consider that they meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as Art. 36 (1), (2) and (3) of the Regulations for development of the academic staff of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The set of documents includes:

- request to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv for disclosure of the procedure for defense of the dissertation, submitted on the 06th of November, 2024;

- CV in European format which contains in 15 annexes Certificates and Diplomas attesting the CV information including the Diplomas of higher education at the Bachelor's degree level (in Philological Education in Bulgarian and Spanish Languages) and the Master's degree level (in Applied Linguistics with Spanish Language);

- Minutes of the Department Council, related to reporting on the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work, as well as Minutes No. 217 of 11th of October, 2024, which also reflects the Order No. RD-21-1730 of 03th of October, 2024 of the Rector of University of Plovdiv for a one-time expansion of the composition of the Department Council for the preliminary discussion of the dissertation;

- Author's abstract of the dissertation that meets the requirements and reflects the content of the thesis;

- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents submitted on the 06th of November, 2024;

- List of 7 (seven) scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation;

- Copies of the seven scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation;

- Reference for compliance with the minimum national requirements for the award of PhD Degree submitted on the 06th of November, 2024, according to which the PhD student collects more (120 points) than the minimum required number of points (80): 50 points were awarded for a submitted dissertation and 70 points for published articles and papers;

- Dissertation work. It consists of 242 pages of scientific text, organized into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references, sources of empirical material and a list of publications on the topic of the dissertation.

The review of the above documents shows that they meet the legal requirements and prove the appropriateness of the procedure of public defense of a dissertation in the field of modern Comparative Linguistics between Bulgarian and Spanish Verb Systems, Norms and Speech realizations as far as the meaning of temporal *Anteriority* is concerned.

Within the scientific jury I have been appointed to prepare an Statement.

2. Topicality of the subject

The subject of Polina Tabakova's dissertation is relevant and the research corresponds to the nowadays issues. On the one hand, it is devoted to the main Verb categories: Mood, Tense and Aspect, and, on the other hand, these categories are examined as invariant, distributive and contextual meanings in a comparative perspective between Bulgarian and Spanish verbs and within the framework of the common temporal content of *Anteriority*. Although numerous works with different theoretical models have been dedicated to the study of the above verb categories, their reconsideration remains on the agenda for a number of reasons: a) the semantic relations of these categories in discourse are extremely complex; b) their formal structuring in different languages, and in particular in Bulgarian and Spanish, is varied and very different; c) there are internal contradictions and unresolved tasks in the existing theoretical and methodological approaches to their description; d) the goals and objectives of Foreign Language teaching in Spanish for Bulgarian students require further reconsideration of the approach to the definition and description of verb forms, meanings and functions; e) the comparative study through the techniques of translation provides additional information and scientific results of a theoretical and applied nature. The dissertation seeks to achieve results in each of the research fields thus outlined.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The thesis shows a conscientious study of the specialized literature and a rich awareness, a thorough insight into linguistic theory, an independent and critical view of established theoretical propositions, which the PhD student refracts through her individual perspective and cognitive evaluation, while showing a responsible, serious and respectful attitude towards all opinions, regardless of the degree of agreement with them. The bibliography cited is rich (243 sources, 122 in Latin and 112 in Cyrillic), thematically focused, covering all aspects of the subject matter and research methods. The extracted sources also indicate serious and thorough research (29 titles of contemporary Spanish-language fiction, 2 titles of Bulgarian-language fiction, 5 electronic sources of Spanish-language periodicals and language corpus, 2 electronic sources of Bulgarian-language fiction).

4. Research methodology

The study relies on Functional-semantic Grammar and the principles of morphological oppositions, neutralization and transposition oriented in a comparative way. The contrastive approach leans on translation and this draws its focus mainly on the textual functions of the selected verb forms.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the research is set out in Chapter 1, where a critical review of the theoretical models of the verbal categories and contents of Temporality,

Aspectuality and Modality in Spanish and Bulgarian is made, as well as of the specificity of translation as a research method, highlighting also the peculiarities of hypotactic coordination in both languages.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The structure of the dissertation is logical, coherent and consistent with the aims, the object and the specific research tasks. I believe that it can be regarded as a merit of the thesis, which also reflects the quality of conceptualization of the topic, object, aims and objectives.

The Introduction elegantly and smoothly carries out the line of demarcation of the notion of Tense from the different non-linguistic dimensions of time. Chapter 1 sets the theoretical and methodological framework of the study and critically reviews the theoretical models of verb categories and contents of Temporality, Aspectuality and Modality in Spanish and Bulgarian, as well as the specificity of translation as a research approach, paying special attention to hypotactic alignment in both languages. Chapter 2 reflects Polina Tabakova's conception of temporal Anteriority and a description of the verb forms that express it in Spanish and Bulgarian. Chapter 3 presents the application of translation approach to the research for the Bulgarian functional equivalents of the Spanish indicative forms within the *Anteriority* as it is conceived in the dissertation. The research is deployed on the basis of a self-selected corpus of excerpted sources.

The thesis has been revised following preliminary discussion in the Department of Romance and German Studies.

I can agree with the results of the comparative analysis of the verb categories in Bulgarian and Spanish (pp. 108-110) presented at the end of Chapter 1.

I express my respect for the exposition in Chapter II and agree with most of the conclusions about the content and functions of the Indicative Tenses studied (pp. 163-165). I have some reservations about the first result concerning the asymmetry of language, which states that the Spanish perfect forms express *Retrospectivity* and the Bulgarian perfect forms express *Resultativity*, as long as I am not convinced that the argument only applies to the invariant meanings of the mentioned forms. At the same time, I accept the author's choice to exclude Present and Future Tenses from the subject of her study, but I do not believe that they are irrelevant to the expression of the *Anteriority* meaning in discourse.

I approve the content of Chapter 3 and agree with the results regarding the Bulgarian functional equivalents of the Spanish Tenses analysed in the translation (p. 215), while acknowledging the validity of the General Conclusions (pp. 216-219).

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

The PhD student has made more than a sufficient number of publications (seven articles), which has presented essential ideas from her research to a broad scientific audience. All publications are comparative in their scope and present the results of the investigation of the temporal and aspectual characteristics of specific verb forms (such as *Aorist*, *Anterior*, *Imperfecto*, *Condicional*) or of verb categories and meanings (*Taxis*, *Verb Tense*, *Anteriority*). They are carried out on the basis of empirical material extracted from contemporary Spanish-language fiction, Bulgarian fiction, and electronic periodicals in Spanish and Bulgarian. The contrastive notes are based on translated equivalents, some of the translations in the articles are Polina Tabakova's contributions, but official literary translations are also processed. The theoretical and methodological guidelines in the publications synchronize with the dissertation and support the conclusions, findings and contributions.

7. Author's abstract

The abstract consists of 32 pages and reflects concisely but fully and faithfully the structure and content of the dissertation and its scientific results, while reflecting the list of publications on the topic of the dissertation and its contributions.

I would like to point out that I agree with the summary of the contributions of the thesis (p. 32 of the Author's Abstract).

8. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

The thesis can be used as a reference in future comparative studies of the temporal and aspectual features of Bulgarian and Spanish verb semantics, as well as in future studies of other functional units in the field of *Anteriority*. It contains a very rich critical review of the specialized literature and the scientific community would benefit from its publication as a monograph.

CONCLUSION:

The dissertation contains scientific-applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for implementation of LDASRB and the relevant Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The submitted materials and dissertation results comply with the minimum national requirements for the award of PhD Degree.

The dissertation shows that the PhD student POLINA TABAKOVA has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the Professional scientific field 2.1. Philology, PhD Programme in Romance Languages, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the research presented by the above peer-reviewed dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and *propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific PhD degree ("doctor") to POLINA TABAKOVA* on Higher Education and Research Area: 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.1. Philology, PhD Programme in Romance Languages.

06th of February, 2025

Sofia

Author of the Statement:

(Assoc. Prof. Vesela Chergova, PhD)