

STATEMENT

By Kalina Stefanova Micheva-Peycheva,

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for the acquisition of a PhD educational and scientific degree

Field of Higher Education: 2. Humanities Professional, Area: 2.1. Philology, Doctoral Programme:
General and Comparative Linguistics

Author: Pavlina Stefanova Petkova

Subject: THE CONCEPT "AIR" IN BULGARIAN AND ENGLISH THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF
CULTURAL LINGUISTICS

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Boryan Georgiev Yanev - Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski"

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

By Order No. RD-22-281 of 06.02.2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the procedure for the defence of my dissertation on " THE CONCEPT "AIR" IN BULGARIAN AND ENGLISH THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL LINGUISTICS" for the PhD degree of Education and Science in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Doctoral Programme: General and Comparative Linguistics. The author of the dissertation is Pavlina Stefanova Petkova - PhD student in full-time studies at the Department of General Linguistics and History of the Bulgarian Language with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryan Georgiev Yanev from Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The set of materials submitted by the PhD student on digital media is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, includes the following documents:

- Application to the Rector of PU for the disclosure of the procedure for dissertation defence;
- CV in European format;
- extract of the departmental council related to the reporting of the readiness for the opening of the procedure and the preliminary discussion of the dissertation;
- dissertation;
- abstract;

- list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation;
- copies of the scientific publications;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- statement of compliance with the specific requirements of the faculty concerned (only for PhD students enrolled by 04.05.2018);

The PhD student has attached 0 studies, 1 monography, 4 publications.

2. Topical relevance

The linguacultural approach to the study of language is topical in contemporary linguistics not only abroad, but also at home. The relevance of the present work is also conditioned by its connection with the anthropocentric direction of modern linguistics. The dissertation, according to its author, is the first such study of the concept of air, which presupposes its significance. It would be of great help for the PhD student to get acquainted with the study "Water and its word-formation kaleidoscope" by Mikhail Shekherdzhiev, which was presented and highly appreciated at the last edition of the UchiBAN forum.

I believe that the topicality of the subject is also proved by the works of a number of Bulgarian and foreign scholars working in the bosom of linguocultural studies. Along with the mentioned names - prof. C. Dimitrova, Assoc. prof. Chakarova, G. Dimitrova, V. Avramova, M. Ilieva, should also include the scholars working within the Sofia Ethnolinguistic area, who have collaborated with the most significant names in the field of ethnolinguistics, some of whom are mentioned by the author - Bartminski, Tolstaya, Maslova, etc. Within the framework of this collaboration, concepts such as freedom, home, labor, nation, family were developed, which can be linked to the concept under study; the scientific analysis also includes the conceptual pairs above - below, sacred - profane, good - evil, pure - impure. The PhD student should familiarize herself with the works of a number of Bulgarian scholars working in the field of linguacultural studies and ethnolinguistics, among whom stand out Maria Kitanova, Kalina Micheva-Peycheva, Mariana Vitanova, Vanya Micheva, etc.

The object of the present study is well motivated. The object of the study is based on the comparison of concepts of Bulgarian and English ethnicity through the prism of linguacultural studies. The excerpted linguistic material in Bulgarian is compared with that in English. The main aim of this dissertation is to propose a formula for structuring the concepts of air and air based on linguistic devices. Directly related to the achievement of the goal are the following tasks: presentation of the main approaches in the study of the concepts; analysis in terms of lexicography of the selected concepts; study of the mechanisms of verbalization; identification of the axiological characteristics of the concepts; interpretation of the concepts in view of associative

relations between the lexeme Air in Bulgarian and English in the linguistic consciousness, etc. In my opinion, Pavlina Petkova knows the conceptual apparatus well, the value of the work is the derivation of the key concepts and their description. In this regard, I have the following questions. What is the author's reason for using the phrase cultural script instead of the long-established cultural scenario in Bulgarian science? Where would the PhD student place the boundary between linguacultural studies and ethnolinguistics, knowing that they largely use the same conceptual apparatus? How would she define linguaculturalism as a term and what are her reasons for not using this label in her work?

3. Knowledge of the problem

Undoubtedly Petkova has traced the development of the problem. Of note is the excellent knowledge of the great names in the history of the discipline such as Whorf, Sapir and Humboldt, as well as the significant developments in the field such as V. Telia, V. A. Maslova, V. B. Vorobyov, Yu. C. Stepanov, Bartminski et al. Suitable for the purposes of the study is the experience of Anna Wierzbicka and her theory of semantic primitives. I would ask Petkova whether she has investigated the selected concepts using the facet methodology proposed by prof. Bartminski?

4. Research methodology

Different methods have been used in this work to study the concept. The text combines etymology, lexicography, modern state of language, word formation, paremiology etc. Therefore, when comparing Bulgarian and English linguaculture, we can find different levels of analysis: semantic, conceptual, comparative, etc. The combination of various methods in the present work fulfils its aim, approaching the problem through different linguistic and interdisciplinary tools.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis and contributions

The present thesis has an enviable length of 392 pages, including the appendices and bibliography, and the subject is organized into 6 chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction accurately sets out the aims and objectives set by the doctoral candidate. For the first chapter - METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH, would suggest changing the title, as the present one may create some ambiguity and link the proposed work to the scientific discipline of methodology. I would pay particular attention to 1.1.8. entitled Psycholinguistic Experiment. Such associative inquiries have been developed for more than 10 years in the framework of various international projects by researchers at the Bulgarian Language Institute. A project entitled "The Associative World of the Bulgarian" was successfully completed in the Ethnolinguistics Section. I find it obligatory to include this information and put it in the context of what has been written. With regard to the analysis of the meaning of the word concept, the types of concepts, and the relationship of concept and connotation discussed in Chapter One, Petkova

should again consult the theoretical works of her colleagues from the Sofia School of Ethnolinguistics.

In contrast to the apparent gaps in the literature developed on the problem and the ways in which the conceptualization is being implemented on home soil, in chapter two - "NOMINATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONCEPT 'AIR' IN THE LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FIELD OF BULGARIAN AND ENGLISH" the author shows a very good knowledge of the lexemes 'Air,' 'Soul,' 'Spirit,' 'Breath,' 'Breathe,' and their English counterparts. The word-formation patterns of the verbs breathe and breathe are also competently presented. I found it useful to learn that in English there are separate lexemes to convey different kinds of breathing, which in Bulgarian we express using adverbs. The chosen way of tabular presentation of the comparative analysis was productive. I would pay special attention to section 2.2.2, where soul in Bulgarian and English are discussed. I think it could be densified and expanded with many examples from Bulgarian dialects representing the meaning of soul for the Bulgarian linguistic picture of the world.

Chapter Three - "VERBALIZATION OF THE CONCEPTS "AIR," "BREATH," AND "BREATHE" IN BULGARIAN AND ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY AND PAREMIOLOGY" clearly navigates the reader through the conceptual apparatus. For me, the section on folklore can be left for another study as it points to a major problem that is presented schematically. The amount of paremias studied in both languages is impressive.

In the fourth chapter - "CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE IDEAS OF "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT" IN THE BULGARIAN AND ENGLISH WORLDVIEW" the author gives numerous examples that present the soul and spirit in their multidimensionality. However, one ambiguity remains for me - why, when both this and the previous chapter deal with phraseologies and paremias, in one the title points to verbalizing and in the other to conceptualizing. Does this not create a false expectation of a very different structure for chapter four?

Concerning chapter five - "AIR AS A SECONDARY INDICATOR OF THE CONCEPTUAL FIELD "WIND" I find the consideration of the derived words of the chosen concept to be fully justified. It is debatable to argue that their meaning is implied and this is evident even from a simple example - wind and windy have completely different connotations. The material presented is excellently systematized and of respectable length. I would venture to reflect again on the title - whether it is appropriate to speak of a conceptual field "wind" instead of a conceptual field with the component/key concept wind, since a conceptual field is a broader concept that cannot be identified with the semantics of a lexeme, however polysemous. Chapter six is semantically related to chapter five, enriching it. I don't know if one could consider merging the two chapters.

The conclusion is relatively short, but it contains the necessary details. In the conclusions, it might be useful to determine which part of the hypotheses have been successfully validated by the excerpted material, and which part has remained insufficiently lexically and conceptually

grounded. I would advise the PhD student to replace the subtitle "Scientific Contributions" with "Research Contributions". Among the contributions, the fact that the present study is the first linguacultural study devoted to the concept of 'Air' in a comparative aspect in Bulgarian and English stands out, and it can be used as a basis for future studies. The results obtained will be of great help in translation studies and in the compilation of a bilingual phraseological dictionary, etc. A sign of the author's scientific bona fides are the appendices, which are of high applicability.

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

The personal contribution of the PhD student can be considered in several aspects: in theoretical terms, in the excellent handling of the conceptual apparatus; in good classification and comparison skills; in the scientific study of the conceptualization and verbalization of the selected concepts, in the richness of the research material. The greatest weakness of the work presented before us is the insufficient knowledge of the work of colleagues in the field of linguacultural studies and ethnolinguistics, which is a mandatory component in the actualization of the problematic and in the tracking and analysis of the scientific literature on the problem. The role of the supervisor should also be highly appreciated, without whom the text would probably not have sounded so structured and scientifically.

7. Abstract

The abstract fully meets the requirements for this type of scientific text, reflecting the main results achieved in the dissertation.

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

I have given my critical remarks and recommendations in the text.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation work has both scientific and scientific-applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and 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 Paisiy Hilendarski University.

The dissertation shows that the PhD student Pavlina Stefanova Petkova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "General and Comparative Linguistics", demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research. Because of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the research conducted, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and propose to the Honorable Scientific Jury to award the degree of PhD of Education and Science to Pavlina Petkova in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Doctoral Programme: General and Comparative Linguistics.

25.03.2025

Prepared by:

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