

# OPINION

by **Prof. Nadya Petrova Cherneva, PhD**

**Head of the Department of Russian Philology at the Faculty of Philology  
of Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski**

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,

Doctoral program in General and Comparative Linguistics

**Author:** Pavlina Stefanova Petkova

**Topic:** "The concept of "air" in Bulgarian and English through the prism of linguoculturology"

**Scientific supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Boryan Georgiev Yanev, PhD – Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski

## **1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student**

By order No. PD-22-281 of 06.02.2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski (PU), I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury in a procedure for the defence of a dissertation on the topic "The concept of "air" in the Bulgarian and English through the prism of linguoculturology" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, doctoral program in General and Comparative Linguistics. The author of the dissertation is Pavlina Stefanova Petkova – a full-time doctoral student to the department of General Linguistics and History of the Bulgarian Language with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Boryan Georgiev Yanev, PhD from Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski.

The doctoral student is a graduate of Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski. She has completed a Bachelor's degree program in Bulgarian and English and a Master's degree program in Translation and Business Communication. Since 2013, she has been working at the Hristo Botev Vocational Secondary School of Agriculture and Economics in Svilengrad, initially as a teacher and later as deputy director. The set of materials on paper submitted by Pavlina Stefanova Petkova is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and includes the following documents:

- a request to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv to open a procedure for defending a dissertation;
- CV in European format;
- minutes from the department council, related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation ;

- dissertation;
- abstract;
- a list of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation;
- copies of scientific publications;
- list of noted citations;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- a certificate of compliance with the specific requirements of the respective faculty (only for doctoral students enrolled by 04.05.2018) ;

The doctoral student has submitted a dissertation, an abstract, and 4 publications.

The submitted materials and documents for the defence are in full compliance with the current regulatory documents legitimizing the finalization of the procedure.

## **2. Relevance of the topic**

The relevance of the topic being developed is predetermined by the lack of such a complex comparative study and by the appropriateness of a linguocultural rethinking of the linguistic explanations of the cultural identity of representatives of different linguocultural communities.

For the needs of the study, lexical, phraseological and paremiological units were excerpted from 15 explanatory, bilingual and specialized dictionaries, the analysis of which reaffirms the status of language as an instrument of knowledge, as a means of transmitting culture and experience, as a result of creative activity.

## **3. Knowledge on the problem**

The conducted comprehensive and in-depth review of the scientific literature on the subject in a diachronic and synchronic perspective demonstrates a high level of theoretical and linguistic preparation, as well as enviable research intuition and accumulated practical experience in teaching English as a foreign language. Excellent knowledge of the most significant publications in the field of linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics and conceptology is a solid basis for constituting an argued terminological and conceptual apparatus - a starting point for achieving the goals and objectives of the dissertation work.

## **4. Research methodology**

The chosen research methodology combines a variety of methods, including descriptive, conceptual, comparative, semantic and componential, allowing to achieve the set goal and obtain an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation.

## **5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions**

The dissertation has a total volume of 391 pages and consists of an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, three appendices and a bibliography (see items 6 and 7 of the "doctoral" review template) and represents the first complex comparative linguocultural study of the concept of *air* in Bulgarian and English.

The main goal of the dissertation work has been achieved - the creation of structural models of the concepts (*air in Bulgarian*) *въздух* and *air* (based on material from Bulgarian and English), the result of a successful complex systematic analysis of linguistic means from both languages. The main approaches to the study of concepts in contemporary linguistic research are analysed; a comprehensive lexicographic picture of the verbal constituents of the studied concepts in all their diversity (lexemes, phrasemes and paremics) is presented; their phraseological activity and imagery were studied as a demonstration of the values and attitudes of linguistic personalities; the associative connections between the lexemes *въздух* (*air in Bulgarian*) and *air* in the linguistic consciousness of speakers of Bulgarian and English were experimentally established.

The scientific-theoretical and practically applied aspects of the study are of undoubted value both for contrastive linguistics, as well as for translation studies and linguodidactics. The full text of the dissertation is the result of an original approach, an impressive volume of excerpts, a comprehensive analysis and the author's own conclusions.

## **6. Assessment of the doctoral student's publications and personal contribution**

The defence documents include 4 publications dedicated to various aspects of scientific research. Of these, 4 are in Bulgarian, 3 are approved as reports at international and national scientific conferences with international participation and published in collections of conference materials in English. One of the publications is in a Web of Science journal.

No evidence of plagiarism was found.

## **7. Author's abstract**

The abstract is developed within the framework of the standard of the scientific genre and reflects the main results and contributions of the dissertation work. It presents the relevance of the topic, the theoretical and practical value of the research, its subject, goals, objectives, methodological basis and structure. The precise derivation of the conclusions from the observations made, the conclusion and contributions in the dissertation work deserve admiration.

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

The presented dissertation contains potential for continued research, which would contribute to the enrichment of lexicographic theory and practice, as well as in the field of linguoculturography.

It contains useful and valuable findings for the theory and practice of both teaching English and Bulgarian, as well as for translation practice.

## CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, scientifically-applied and applied results that represent an original contribution to science* and **meet all** the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ADASRB and the relevant Regulations of Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski.

The dissertation shows that doctoral student Pavlina Stefanova Petkova **possesses** in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills, **demonstrating** qualities and skills for independently conducting scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the research conducted, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and *I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"* to Pavlina Stefanova Petkova in the field of higher education: 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Doctoral program in *General and Comparative Linguistics*.

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Opinion prepared by:**

(Prof. Nadya Cherneva, PhD)