

REVIEW

by **Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Ivanova Mihailova-Stalyanova,**
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

(Ph.D., first name, surname, last name - acad. Ph.D. in the university or scientific organization)

of the dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

2. Doctor of Philosophy 2, Professional field 2.1. Humanities, Doctoral Programme in General and Comparative Linguistics

Author. Pavlina Stefanova Petkova

Topic: "The Concept of "Air" in Bulgarian and English through the Prism of Linguocultural Studies"

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

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

General description of the submitted materials

By Order No. RD-22-281 of 06.02.2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the procedure for the defense of a dissertation on "The Concept of Air in Bulgarian and English through the Prism of Linguocultural Studies" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. 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 "Paisii Hilendarski".

The set of materials submitted by Pavlina Stefanova Petkova on paper and in electronic form is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and includes the following documents:

- Application to the Rector of PU for the disclosure of the procedure for the defence of a dissertation;
- CV in European format;

- minutes 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 scientific publications;
- list of citations noted;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;

All the documentation related to the PhD studies and required by the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Application of the Law of the Paisii Hilendarski University for conducting the procedure of thesis defense for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", was duly submitted to the Scientific Jury and fully met all the requirements.

Brief biographical data about the PhD student

Pavlina Petkova graduated from the Ivan Bogorov Language School in Dimitrovgrad. She graduated from P. Hilendarski with a bachelor's degree (Bulgarian language and English, teacher of Bulgarian language and literature and English language and literature) and a master's degree (translation and business communication, translator and business communication specialist). From 2013 to 2016 she was a teacher, 2016-2024 besides being a teacher she was also a deputy director at the Vocational School of Agriculture and Economics in Svilengrad. Since 2021 she is enrolled as a PhD student at P. She is a Ph. D. student at the University of St. Hilendarski.

If all the documentation is in order and the PhD student fulfils all the conditions for obtaining the scientific and educational degree "Doctor", the subject of the rest of the review will be exclusively the dissertation entitled "The Concept of "Air" in Bulgarian and English through the prism of linguocultural studies".

Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the objectives and tasks

The dissertation presented has a total length of 391 pages and consists of an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, three appendices and a bibliography.

The object of the research is the concept of air in Bulgarian and English linguoculture, as well as the analysis of lexemes whose semantics reflect the concept of air in Bulgarian and English.

The main goal of her research is to model the structures of the concepts of air and breathe based on a systematic description of linguistic devices. The chosen topic is extremely topical and fits into the contemporary scientific search for constructing the picture of the world through the prism of different languages. And the comparative approach makes it particularly interesting. The dissertation analyzes the verbalization of the concepts, identifying their value characteristics; studies the representation of the concepts in the phraseological fund of the Bulgarian and English languages, and examines the word-formation activity of the concepts breathe and wind;

A complex of methods and approaches is applied - lexicographic research, linguocultural analysis and a combination of linguistic analysis methods - semantic, comparative and component analysis. The chosen research methodology allows achieving the set goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation.

The extracted researched material is from lexicographical sources of both languages (here I expected to see, however, more recent sources also in terms of dictionaries, e.g. of V. Radeva, as well as more recent phraseological dictionaries).

Chapter 1 "Methodological basis of the study" is essentially a theoretical review of the literature on the subject. The PhD student demonstrates knowledge of the main works, synthesizing them with understanding and scientific precision.

Chapter 2 examines the nominative characteristics of the concept 'air' in the lexical-semantic field of Bulgarian and English - it describes the different types of system relations and those in the derivational fields and among the constituent names of the lexemes 'air' 'soul', 'spirit', 'breath', 'breathe' and their English counterparts; thematic groups in their lexical fields and their English correspondences; the word-formation systems of the verbs breathe and breathe; The PhD student pays special attention to word-formation processes, as she finds important regularities in them.

Already here I would like to make one clarification - the PhD student speaks in many places about ethnicities, on the other hand - about languages. We know that within the territorial boundaries of the countries of Britain and Bulgaria the use of language and conceptualizing the reality is not carried out by a single ethnicity, so this strikes me as a terminological inaccuracy that would be good to remove in any future publication of the study. It seems more terminologically sound to me to speak of native speakers of the relevant language.

I find the differentiation of the thematic groups of the linguistic resources from the lexical fields of the concepts under consideration to be particularly beneficial in the dissertation. The proposed classification of thematic groups shows the movement from concreteness to abstractness in both languages in the direction from air as matter to soul and spirit as immaterial entities with a predominance of religious themes in Bulgarian as a result of inherited Byzantine cultural traditions - a multidisciplinary presentation of the issues that is in line with the latest approaches in linguistics and humanities.

The analysis is accurate, readable, correct, the tables give the text additional clarity.

Chapter 3 "Phraseology" deals with the verbalization of the concepts 'air' 'breath', 'breathe' in Bulgarian and English phraseology and paremiology. Particularly striking is that the phraseologies from both languages are mainly related to the activity of man and his character.

Chapter 4 "Conceptualisation of the ideas of soul and spirit in the Bulgarian and English world picture" presents a brief cultural-historical overview of the presence of the concepts of soul and spirit in historical and anthropological contexts - a very interesting chapter for non-specialist readers as well, which provides a rich cultural background, which is also of contribution to the thesis.

The receptions for systematic relations, enumeration of collocations, and syntagms containing the key concepts of the study are particularly useful in teaching a foreign language; they can also be helpful to translators.

The doctoral student investigates the processes of affixation (derivation), conversion (zero derivation) and composition, the emergence of nests and word-formation sequences.

The dissertation ends with 3 appendices with a total of 200 pages. 1 - Lexicographical information about the lexemes: 'air' 'wind', 'soul', 'spirit', 'breath', 'breathe' and their English correspondences, 2 - Topic groups, 3 - Psycholinguistic experiment - sample questionnaires in Bulgarian and English. In fact, it would be interesting to conduct the survey proposed in this appendix and describe its results. As such, the appendix does not reflect the work of the thesis, but we could consider it a request for future research. Unnecessarily burdensome here and unnecessary, it seems to me, is also the information related to the semantics of the lexemes studied, namely the articles transcribed from the dictionaries and separated as a separate appendix. Some of it has been cited in the course of the study, moreover it is easily accessible to any interested reader.

The conclusion is a synthesized summary of the study that summarizes the results and highlights the conclusions drawn. The conclusions are essentially evidence of the scientific analysis in the thesis.

I accept the author's contributions as an adequate self-assessment of the dissertation work, as they correctly point out the practical contributions in the field of phraseology study, the potential for using the processed material in the process of foreign language teaching and, above all, for building a small but essential piece of the puzzle of the Bulgarian and English linguistic picture of the world and their comparison.

The **bibliography** is rich (120 items), texts in Bulgarian, Russian, English are cited, and the PhD student reflects the main works on the problem.

Assessment of the dissertation publications

The doctoral candidate has attached 4 publications on the topic of the dissertation, of which she is an independent author. Of these, 1 is an article in a journal, refereed and indexed in the Web of science database. The other 3 articles are in proceedings of scientific conferences in Bulgaria.

Abstract

The abstract submitted by the PhD student correctly reflects the content of the thesis. It contains the necessary requisites, including the contributions of the dissertation and a list of publications on the topic.

Critical comments and recommendations

From the very beginning of the chapter, it is assumed that a linguistic experiment will be carried out to establish associative links between the lexemes air and air in the linguistic consciousness of native speakers of Bulgarian and English. The results of this experiment are not described in the thesis.

I have already mentioned the inappropriate use of the term ethnicity.

And one remark not on the substance - in this type of text it seems to me unnecessary to give the etymology of certain imposed terms (method, phraseology, etc.).

CONCLUSION

The dissertation meets the requirements for the award of the PhD degree (independent research conducted using a defined methodology and producing a complete scientific text, with specially designed corpora). The dissertation contains scientific, scientific and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADASB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADASB and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The dissertation thesis shows that the PhD student Pavlina Stefanova Petkova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in scientific specialty 2.1. She demonstrates qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Due to the aforementioned, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science to Pavlina Stefanova Petkova in the field of higher education:2. 2.1. Ph.D. in General and Comparative Linguistics.

25.02.2025

Reviewer:

(signature)

Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Mihaylova-Stalyanova

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