

## OPINION

**Of Dr. Elena Slavova Getova – Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philology of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**

*(academic degree, first name, middle name, surname – academic position at the higher education or scientific organization)*

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**"

in: Field of Higher Education 2. Humanities,  
professional field 2.1. Philology,  
doctoral program "Romance Languages"

**Author:** BORYANA DIMITROVA MILUSHEVA-DUKOVA

**Topic:** PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ARTURO PEREZ-REVERTE'S NOVELS AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO BULGARIAN

**Supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselka Nenkova – *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv

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

By Order No. ПД-22-274 of 3.02. 2026 of the Rector of the *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to implement the procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic "PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE NOVELS OF ARTURO PEREZ-REVERTE AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO BULGARIAN" for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" in: Field of Higher Education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, PhD program "Romance Languages". The author of the dissertation is Boryana Dimitrova Milusheva-Dukova – a part-time PhD student at the Department of Romance and German Studies, with a supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselka Nenkova from the *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials presented by Boryana Dimitrova Milusheva-Dukova on paper is in accordance with Article 36. (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv and includes the following documents: an application to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv to begin the procedure for the defense of the dissertation; CV in European format; minutes of the Department meeting related to the reporting of the readiness to open the procedure and to the preliminary discussion of the dissertation; dissertation; abstract; list of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation; copies of scientific publications; declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents.

The PhD student has attached one monograph and 4 publications on the topic of the dissertation.

### **2. Brief biographical data of the PhD student**

Boryana Milusheva-Dukova graduated from Nineth French Language High School in the city of Sofia, with Spanish as the main language of instruction. She completed her higher education at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, majoring in two specialties: Spanish Philology and Bulgarian Philology with a second Western language French. Her interest in the Spanish language and culture is evidenced by the many literary translations of famous Spanish novelists from the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Her work as a translator has also led her to a publishing practice, again dedicated to promoting Spanish literature among the Bulgarian readership. Boryana Milusheva-Dukova is also the author of fiction – novels, novellas and collections of short stories – which is a convincing testimony to the professional approach and deep understanding of the nature of literary translation and the author's position in this bilateral process: a process of transferring not only languages, but also cultures – between Spanish and Bulgarian – language, traditions and historical heritage.

### **3. Relevance of the topic**

The problem developed in the dissertation is relevant in several directions. First of all, it is the choice of an author, an extremely popular novelist, who has been extensively translated into Bulgarian. Secondly, there is an abundance of comparative tables in the dissertation, illustrating the possibilities and solutions for translation from Spanish into Bulgarian, which makes a contribution to applied science. A high degree of innovation and a level of relevance of the problem are also evidenced by the specific hypotheses proposed at the beginning of the dissertation. The research problem itself

– the study of the possibilities of translating phraseological units from Spanish into Bulgarian precisely in the work of Arturo Pérez-Reverte – already raises a relevant research question that has not been explored so far.

#### **4. Knowledge of the problem. Research methodology**

The PhD student knows in detail the state of research and publications on the research problem and creatively evaluates the rich bibliographic material. The chosen research methodology allows a combination of two scientific platforms – phraseology as a science (traced in a wide European, Spanish and Bulgarian context and traditions) and translatology (the theory of translation also in a broad chronological and conceptual context). This is how the goals set at the beginning of the scientific study have been achieved and adequate answers to the scientific hypotheses predetermined to function in the dissertation have been obtained.

#### **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and its contributions**

Let's start with the numbers – six novels by Arturo Pérez-Reverte, five translators of his novels into Bulgarian, over 250 examples of illustration of the tasks set in the dissertation, more than 20 years (1995 – 2019) between the first novel studied and the last included in this literary analysis, almost 20 years (from 2000 to 2020) separate the first translation of a novel by the Spanish author into Bulgarian and the last, traced as a basis for the reliability of the examples of phraseological units in the dissertation text.

And let's continue with an extremely important thesis for the objectivity of the research. It is associated with the choice of proper phraseological units (PPU) as the center of the study, "due to their relatively more frequent use in fiction, on the one hand, and on the other, due to the obstacles that these units create in all three phases of translation: the identification of phraseological units (PU), the overall understanding of the phraseological meaning in the specific text and its transmission in its entirety in the target language. However, the boundaries are deliberately left without a definite delimitation in order to ensure that the linguistic data guide the analysis, and not the other way around, which ensures the objectivity of the study" (p.6 of the dissertation). Here I allow myself to include a more voluminous quote from the dissertation, because I would like to pay attention to the field of objectivity in such a study. Respect for empirical data, for linguistic examples, which are available and traceable in the selected novels, is obvious. A feature of this research is precisely the rich theoretical base on which the main hypotheses of the dissertation are based, and at the same time the preservation of the priority of language examples, which are leading in the analytical approach. Very often we notice that one or several theoretical positions are applied to the literary fabric of a selected work, and for the needs of the theoretical conception the reading is profiled, i.e. the empirical material takes into account the theoretical views, and not vice versa. That is not the case in the present study.

When writing about the frequency of use of PU in Pérez-Reverte's novels, it is quite natural to assume that the author will apply the rich linguistic palette that the use of phraseological units provides. The perceived diversity of PU in the work of five translators of Pérez-Reverte's novels provides a sound argument to illustrate this hypothesis. When it comes to translating fiction, researchers agree that literary translation does not rely only on its informativeness, something that is inherent in a non-fiction text, but also includes "the participation of feelings and imagination" (Vaseva 1989: 144). (p. 104) It is known that one of the greatest tests for the translator is to adequately convey the message of the PU. The dissertation in this sense refers to Timofeeva's research: "Timofeeva (2012: 497) points out that it is customary to talk about the difficulties in translating phraseological units and there have even been opinions about the untranslatability of some of them due to the historical and socio-cultural references they have." (p.106)

The most important issue, it seems to me, in identifying the value of PU and the efforts of translators when working with the novels of Arturo Pérez-Reverte, is the fact, as Boryana Dukova has also mentioned, that the author himself has a position on language. He "emphasizes that if language manages to preserve the beauty of expression, the correctness of the term, the noble or inferior, but age-old fragrance, of the other languages that combine in it and have made it what it is, then it is a treasure. A careful reading of Pérez-Reverte's understanding of language as the main writer's tool can lead us to the conclusion that the author from Cartagena would not neglect the use of PU, since these units, especially those distinguished by connotative overlays, hide great potential." (p. 132)

Boryana Dukova attests to the fact that "the author uses a huge part of the rich language palette of PU: he handles PU from the three language styles – low, neutral and high; uses PU with different

connotations – geographical-social, cultural-historical, expressive; uses polysemy, synonymy, the variations of PU, and often applies creative modifications." (p.135).

As a particularly valuable observation in the work of Boryana Dukova, I would like to distinguish the search for the reasons for the use of PU of the three language styles. This is in relation to the linguistic characterization of the personages in the six novels because, for example, Dukova states, the use of PPU from the vulgar register is significant in *The Queen of the South* and is a one-off in *Good Men*. In *The Queen of the South*, this spectrum of use of PPU is natural to the characters' speech and thus builds compelling psychological characterization. In *Good Men*, in which the main characters are aristocrats and members of the Royal Academy, the use of PPU occurs only in the speech of the assassin Raposo. A precise finding is also the use of PU in Latin. They have been observed in all of the six novels, but their use is most noticeable in the speech of the characters in *The Communion of Seville* and in *Good Men*, which is quite natural in view of the cultural world that is reflected in these novels. In this direction are the persuasive statements of the dissertation regarding the hard-to-translate culturemes concerning natural sciences, nature, material culture, social culture, spiritual and religious culture, language practices and traditions, i.e. the memory of the language. The complexity of translating the culturemes, the dissertation summarizes, "stems from the need to convey the meaning of the PU, while preserving their national-historical flavor or at least hinting at it." (p.225)

## **6. Assessment of the publications and the contributions to science of the PhD student**

The publications that are thematically related to the dissertation are 4 articles that have been published in prestigious scientific journals – *Scientific Research* of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Plovdiv and editions of Sofia University and New Bulgarian University.

## **7. Abstract**

The abstract has been created according to the requirements of the relevant regulations and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains *scientific and applied scientific results, which represent an original contribution to science* and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the relevant Regulations of *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv.

The dissertation shows that the PhD student Boryana Dukova has in-depth theoretical knowledge, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research. In view of the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the research carried out, presented in the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions and *propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of "doctor"* to Boryana Dimitrova Milusheva-Dukova in the area of Higher Education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, PhD program "Romance Languages".

March 2, 2026

**Author of the opinion:** .....

(signature)

**Associate Professor Dr. Elena Getova**

(academic position, degree, first name, surname)