

REVIEW

of the dissertation

“LINGUOCULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGH LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE”

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in professional direction 2.1.
Philology (Applied linguistics)

Author: Antoaneta Nacheva

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Habil Juliana Ivanova Stoyanova

Antoineta Nacheva is a graduate of Sofia University: here she successfully completed her bachelor's degree majoring in “Bulgarian Philology” (2018), she graduated with a master's degree in “Linguistics - language system and speech practices” (2019) and continued her studies as PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics (2020–2024).

During the academic year 2023–2024, she leads a course on language culture, which is an important step in her professional realization. Meanwhile, Antoaneta Nacheva applies her professional knowledge and skills as a philologist in the field of journalism (she is an editor in various media - in “Trud”, “Europa” and “Eurocom” televisions, the online edition Webground www.expert.bg).

This activity, as well as the teaching of language culture, sharpens the doctoral student's attention to modern language practice, giving her the opportunity to observe the speech of Bulgarian politicians in action - right from the rostrum of the Parliament. Of course, Antoineta Nacheva's interest in the specifics of political speech was stimulated and directed by her scientific supervisors - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladislav Milanov and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dilyana Dencheva.

This is how she arrives at the topic of the dissertation work: “LINGUOCULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGH LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE”. The title is formulated too generally, but the concretization of the doctoral thesis is in the direction of a very interesting and up-to-date problem: linguistic and cultural analyzes of political discourse - more precisely, of speeches delivered by representatives of various parties and parliamentary groups, and of debates between candidates for president in the last presidential election.

The structure of the text is in accordance with the requirements of the genre: introduction, two chapters, conclusion and bibliography, in which more than 190 titles are cited (mainly in Bulgarian and Russian). The work, with a total volume of 283 pages, has the character of a comprehensive study on the topic stated in the title, which presupposes a purposeful research work.

The introduction (pp. 3–8) formulates the object, subject, aims and research methods of the dissertation and emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of the linguoculturological approach chosen as the theoretical framework of political discourse research.

In the first chapter (“Linguoculturology - essence and place among other linguistic disciplines”, pp. 9-58) the theoretical-methodological framework of the own empirical research is laid. Here, the emergence of the relatively young scientific field of linguoculturology is presented and discussed, whereby its historical roots, its relationship with culturology, sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, cultural anthropology, pragmatics are sought.

The most significant place is devoted to the clarification of the concepts “picture of the world”, “linguistic picture of the world” and “linguistic personality”. In relation to the role of language in shaping the worldview, Sapir-Whorf’s theory of linguistic relativity is also involved. In order to more clearly distinguish the linguistic picture of the world, closely related concepts, such as “scientific” versus “naive picture” of the world, “conceptual” and “paremic picture” of the world, have been successively introduced and explained.

Next, the linguistic personality is discussed, which in its role of *homo loquens* unites individuals with social characteristics, influenced not least by the national mentality. The concept of “political discourse” as a type of discursive practice, which will be the subject of its own research in the next chapter, is also clarified here.

From the part dedicated to communicative behavior, it becomes clear that political discourse is understood as a type of verbal (and not only verbal) activity related to the persons who produce it, in their capacity as representatives of a given ethnic, social and professional group, pursuing a certain communicative purpose in relation to the addressees to whom the speech is directed, and using language resources in accordance with the specific communicative situation, topic, etc.

In Chapter one, another concept is introduced, which is central to the topic of the dissertation, as it is also included in its title: speech etiquette. Speech etiquette is defined as a set of socially

established patterns of speech behavior that express the etiquette of behavior through speech (p. 56).

The author also dwells on the narrower understanding of speech etiquette in Bulgarian linguistics (by authors such as D. Mangacheva, Hr. Panteleeva, K. Tsankov, M. Stefanova, N. Paskalev, etc.), which is primarily associated with high speech etiquette as socially established linguistic patterns of politeness, including the formulas of speech realization. The chapter ends with a working definition of the discussed concept chosen by the author - a definition that is applied in the analyzes of the empirical material.

The second chapter (“Linguistic-cultural characteristics of the chairmen of political parties and parliamentary groups”, pp. 59-265) presents the results of authors own experimental research - the analyzes of the linguistic behavior of Bulgarian parliamentarians with the aim of revealing their linguistic-cultural characteristics.

The selection of the studied politicians is not accidental: they are persons emblematic of our politics of the last decades. For each of these nine politicians, a speech quoted is representative of him/her in terms of both his/her political views and biases and his/her preferred language style. The part dedicated to the given political figure begins with a brief description of his/her political development and his/her main political views, insofar as these views are exhibited in his/her speech characteristics. The analyzes are focused on the specific discursive strategies typical of the given public figure.

Various structural elements are the object of attention: lexemes and phraseological units belonging to various stylistic registers, syntactic turns, intonation contours, hesitation markers, specific rhetorical strategies, stylistic figures, etc. These linguistic characteristics are analyzed with a purpose to achieving the desired impact on the addressees, as well as in relationship to compliance with or deviation from “high linguistic etiquette”.

I highly appreciate the ways in which the specific features of the quoted speeches are described - they are interesting and highlight the most typical in the verbal behavior of the given politician. However, some historical, philosophical and etymological references unnecessarily burden the text and divert the reader's attention from the main line of exposition. Here are some examples: defining some terms and concepts well known to the reader, such as “ideology” (p. 105), “terror” (p. 118)

and “genocide” (p. 119); a historical reference on the socialist movement in Europe (p. 106), which in no way contributes to a clearer highlighting of Yavor Bozhankov’s linguistic and cultural characteristics (the author's deep conviction is that, despite the recommendations during the internal discussion of the dissertation, this deviation is necessary); an explanation of the clash between thesis and antithesis, expressed in the attitude of this same politician to the sending of arms to Ukraine, through references to the philosophy of Hegel and Kant (pp. 112–113), etc.

What this chapter lacks is an introductory text, a must for any experimental work. At the beginning of the chapter, information should be added explaining in a systematized form: the method of selection of the researched persons (in this case, politicians); the manner in which the experimental material was collected; the research methodology: what and how it is analyzed, why different linguistic, communicative-pragmatic, rhetorical, etc. features are emphasized in different speeches. In the sub-headings of the individual parts, the expression “linguistic-cultural characteristics” appears as a leitmotif, therefore, in the summaries, it is important to indicate what exactly is “linguistic-cultural” in the analyzes made.

The last part of the second chapter, under the title “Speech strategies in the presidential candidate debates (based on material from the pre-election race between Prof. Anastas Gerdzhikov and Rumen Radev)” analyzes recordings of the pre-election debates of the named persons. The chapter begins with a theoretical introduction, the purpose of which is to explain the concepts of political language, political correctness, political speaking, political discourse and propaganda. The author has decided that it is better to define these concepts here, although it would be more logical for them to appear in the first chapter, when introducing the reader to the term “political discourse”, which is quite general. In this part, the key word is *debates*, ie. the emphasis is placed on the dialogicity of the cited speech realizations of the two politicians, although other important speech characteristics are also commented on, such as speech tempo, diction, logical emphasis, rhetorical skills, verbal aggression, clichés, adherence to high speech etiquette, as well as deviations from it.

The concluding part of the dissertation (pp. 265–267) contains summaries and conclusions that accurately reflect the results of the research. I also agree with the contributions of the dissertation formulated by the author.

So far I have highlighted a number of positive qualities of the individual chapters, while also discussing some of their shortcomings.

I would also like to point out certain omissions in the sources selected for citation. For example: when discussing the speaking person, *homo loquens* (pp. 33–34), the two monographs of Prof. Dr. Dimitar Popov: “Linguistic Personology” (2016) and “Introduction to Speech Science” (2022) are not taken into account, although have been added to the bibliography list.

For women’s speaking, mentioned in connection with the analysis of Cornelia Ninova’s speech, it would be more appropriate to cite Deborah Tanen with her translated in Bulgarian monograph “You just don’t understand: Women and men in conversation” (1997) rather than the book of Mireille Piarotta analyzing women in fairy tales. Deborah Tannen’s book does appear in the bibliography, but the content of her monograph is not considered in the text. The slang was approached in the same way - two important publications of Georgi Arnyanov are reflected in the bibliography, but are not present in the text itself, when analyzing the slang words and expressions in the politicians’ speech.

An interesting and extensive theoretical presentation of verbal aggression is included in the part analyzing the speech of Kostadin Kostadinov. At the very beginning we read: “I will take the liberty of sharing in my dissertation text a more extensive study by Vladislav Milanov, in which important conclusions about the nature of verbal aggression have been drawn, in a comparative way”. The following is a text that reflects what was written by Vl. Milanov, but without distinguishing the quotes from the retold places. It is especially strange that on pp. 181–181 we come across a sentence whose author is clearly not A. Nacheva, as it contains a participle in a masculine form: “A few years ago I was appointed as an expert in criminal proceedings in which a lady brings a claim against his neighbor”. At least here it is expected to place the written text in quotation marks and add the exact bibliographic data of the quoted sentence.

Shortly after the summaries following the presentation of Vl. Milanov text, we come across a fragment that is obviously extracted from an article by Antoaneta Nacheva and incorporated into the dissertation text without changes. “The present article aims to present examples of verbal aggression from the last parliaments of Bulgaria, comparing them with some examples used in Czech political speech” (p. 182). What is worrying is not so much the naming of the dissertation fragment as an “article”, but the fact that it once again raises a theoretical discussion about verbal aggression - a discussion that should have been integrated into the previous part of the exposition, along with the quotations from Vl. Milanov.

I highly appreciate the comparison between the manifestations of verbal aggression in Bulgarian and in Czech political language (pp. 185–195), giving support to the thesis that these manifestations have a supranational character.

The critical remarks and comments made above are not intended to divert attention from the positive qualities of the work proposed for review, but to support the next step in Antoaneta Nacheva's development - the publication of the dissertation as book.

The scientific contributions of the dissertation are precisely highlighted and comprehensively described by the doctoral student. I agree with them and therefore I will not comment on them here.

On the topic of the dissertation, six publications are presented in specialized scientific journals ("Contemporary Linguistics", "Bulgarian Speech" and in the refereed journal "Foreign Language Education"), through which Antoineta Nacheva asserts her presence among specialists analyzing political speech.

The abstract in a volume of 39 pages accurately reflects the content of the dissertation.

Referring to what has been said so far, I would like to emphasize that, despite some critical comments, the dissertation work "LINGUOCULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN HIGH LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE" meets all the legal and scientific requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional direction 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty "Applied Linguistics", which gives me reason to vote with conviction for awarding this degree to Antoineta Peteva Nacheva, as well as to appeal to the other members of the scientific jury to give a positive vote.

15.05.2024

/Prof. Dr. Habil Juliana Ivanova Stoyanova/