

DOCTORAL THESIS REVIEW

Thesis author: Antoaneta Peteva Nacheva

Thesis subject: Linguocultural differences in high language etiquette

Field of study: 2.1.Philology, Bulgarian language - Applied linguistics

Review author: Prof. Petya Nacheva Osenova, PhD, Saint Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia

I was appointed as member of the jury reviewing the defence of the above doctoral thesis by means of Order No. ПД38-98 of 19.02.2024, issued by the Rector of Saint Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. The set of materials submitted by the candidate includes all the necessary documents for the procedure. Antoaneta Nacheva has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Article 2b(2) and (3) of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act. In fact, I would like to note that the award of a doctoral degree requires only three publications related to the thesis; the candidate has, nevertheless, submitted six publications, of which at least one was published in an indexed journal. This fact clearly demonstrates the candidate's diligence and scholarly activity.

Antoaneta Nacheva graduated in Bulgarian philology at the Saint Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia in 2018 and in 2019 enrolled the Master's programme in Linguistics – Language System and Speech Practices. Since 2020 she is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at the Department of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language. She has worked as a reporter, editor, journalist.

The candidate has prepared 6 publications related to her thesis. All of them are independently written. Thematically, the articles deal with the following issues: peculiarities of commentator's speech, parameters of offensive speech, strategies in high speech etiquette and presidential candidate debates.

The **abstract** (39 pages) meets all the requirements for the genre. It is comprehensive and correctly reflects the main points and scholarly contributions of the thesis.

The thesis's topic provides major contributions to the interdisciplinary field of linguocultural studies, as differences in high speech etiquette in the political sphere have so far not been examined in a full study in their own right.

The thesis (283 pages) consists of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion, scientific contributions, a bibliography and the electronic sources used. The bibliography includes more than 130 titles, which shows the candidate's excellent knowledge demonstrated by the fact that she uses analytical tools from various scientific fields. The fact that Antoaneta Nacheva has defined all the concepts used in the description of the speech behaviour of each of the analysed politicians also makes a very positive impression.

The **introduction** briefly discusses linguocultural studies as a separate research field that combines aspects of linguistics and cultural studies. The thesis introduces the object and subject of the study. The object covers statements in political discourse from the point of view of correlation with the official business style, trends in the use of different linguistic devices and the role of extra-linguistic factors (such as political “seniority”, political beliefs, etc.).

An appropriate definition of high linguistic etiquette is provided and applied to the public speech of politicians. The speeches of specific political leaders and representatives of the political class have been examined. These are discussed and, in my opinion, very well selected to provide a comprehensive picture of political speech in the country in recent years. The aim and objectives focus on specific speech strategies and the dynamics in their use.

A valuable contribution is the archive of political speeches collected by the candidate, which, after appropriate processing, can become part of electronic corpora and search systems. Empirical, analytical and comparative methods are used as methods.

Chapter One, entitled *Linguocultural Studies - Nature and Place among Other Linguistic Disciplines*, presents the main features of linguocultural studies in the context of related disciplines. The linguistic, scientific, conceptual, and paroemial worldviews are examined in turn. Attention is then given to linguistic personality, national character, discourse, and, more specifically, political discourse. Last but not least in importance, speech etiquette is also discussed. **Chapter Two**, *Linguocultural Characteristics of Political Party and Parliamentary Group Chairpersons*, is the main contribution of the thesis. Therefore, this part is at least four times larger in volume compared to Chapter One. It presents the linguocultural characteristics of nine Bulgarian politicians, most of them chairmen of political parties. The last sub-part presents an analysis of speech strategies in the presidential candidates' debates between prof. Anastas Gerdzhikov and Rumen Radev. A wealth of illustrative material is used throughout. The linguocultural portraits of politicians are approached individually, without following a

strict scheme. This is a good strategy, given that each politician has a specific political path and, consequently, specific political public speech. **The conclusion** summarises the results of the study, namely: Bulgarian politicians fail to reach the standards of high speech etiquette; in this regard, hate speech, mixing of speech registers, excessive use of clichés are observed; each linguistic portrait reflects the specificity of the speech behaviour of the particular politician.

The candidate has made six scholarly contributions that correctly reflect the strengths and originality of the research. I would like to present them in the following way: for the first time, linguocultural differences in high speech etiquette have been thoroughly and comprehensively addressed in a scholarly work on political speech; the topic has been approached in an interdisciplinary manner without losing focus on the language of politicians; emphasis has been placed on the individual features of politicians' speech in a comparative perspective; the collected material is also significant from an applied point of view, as it can be used for further observations and research.

I have some minor remarks and recommendations, which in no way undermine my highly positive opinion of the work presented. In my opinion it is uncommon for a doctoral thesis to comprise only two chapters. Given the fact that the second chapter is much more voluminous, it might be a good idea to divide it into at least two chapters (e.g., one chapter on the analysis of the speeches of political party chairpersons and one on other political figures and the presidential candidate campaign). While I make a positive note the candidate's intention to use existing corpora of Bulgarian parliamentary speech in her future work, I think she could have used such material quite successfully in the present study as well, subject of course to its limitations in time, completeness and scope.

Based on my comments regarding the merits of the thesis presented, I would like to confidently propose to the esteemed jury to award Antoaneta Nacheva the degree of Doctor.

Date: 02.05.2024

Review author: