

OPINION

from Assoc. Prof. Gergana Padareva-Ilieva, PhD, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field

2.1. Philology (Applied Linguistics)

with a dissertation on the topic: “Linguocultural Differences in High Language Etiquette”,

presented by doctoral student Antoaneta Nacheva

Supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Vladislav Milanov, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Dilyana Dencheva Dencheva, PhD

Antoaneta Nacheva graduated in "Bulgarian Philology" and has experience as a journalist, which probably gave rise to her interest in the study of public speech. The scientific publications realized during the PhD education are sufficient and even exceed those required according to the National requirements.

The dissertation, for which I have the pleasure to write an opinion, has a current topic, developed on empirical material, and scientifically based in the field of linguistic and cultural studies. The dissertation has a standard structure - it contains an introduction, two chapters - one of which is theoretical, the other contains the empirical observation and analysis, conclusion, scientific contributions and bibliography – a total of 283 pages.

In the introduction, doctoral student Nacheva justifies the choice of scientific field, outlines the specific object of her study - political statements in the context of official public communication. Even here, an interesting question is posed that has been bothering me for a long time: "...to what extent are linguistic and cultural differences the reason for the unequal implementation of high speech etiquette and whether the goal is to get closer to the speech and perception of Bulgarian citizens" (p. 4). The objectives of the work are clearly outlined - tracing the way in which "...speech strategies are implemented in the public speaking of some of the most active Bulgarian politicians..." (p. 5). Through a comparison, specific features in public speech related to the use of specific linguistic phenomena are presented. The tasks that the work

sets itself are also indicated - extraction of material, observations and analysis, and this presupposes the methods used in the dissertation, described in detail in their specifics, subject to the peculiarities of the research work.

Interestingly, the lack of a single structural model in the analysis of the speech portraits of the selected political figures is surprising, but actually it is justified, because "...their speech sets different parameters of the analysis" (p. 7). If the analysis were framed in a predetermined pattern, this would limit it by searching only those examples that would fit the frame. It is true, it would be interesting from a linguistic point of view to analyse the political speech at different linguistic levels, but on the other hand, the topic of the dissertation implies consideration in Linguoculturology, and such a broader analysis is always a possible step in further research.

Doctoral student Nacheva makes a good theoretical overview of Linguoculturology as a "relatively modern scientific field", "which unites Linguistic and cultural science" (p. 9), managing not to lose sight of her main object - living speech and communication in the context of high speech etiquette. In this sense, the presentation of Ethnolinguistics and Sociolinguistics, which often accompany this linguistic field, is justified, emphasizing Linguoculturology as researching "above all, the living communicative processes and the relationship of the linguistic expressions used in them synchronously ..." (Telia 1996: 218, p. 10). That is how she came to her understanding of the main task of Linguoculturology - "... to bring to the fore the cultural significance of the linguistic unit, or in other words, the cultural knowledge that appears under language and utterances." (p. 13). The author skilfully goes through the ideas of the relationship between language and culture, through Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis of linguistic relativity, and also states her own position on the question of how language and thinking are connected. She handles the relevant terminology and distinguishes concepts such as linguistic worldview, scientific worldview, conceptual worldview, proverbial worldview. In her review she covers the research of various scholars and appropriately weaves them into her text to substantiate one or another statement or as a basis for subsequent analysis or conclusion regarding the relevant term. However, some of the mentioned studies (such as those of D. Popov, N. Stalyanova and Vl. Milanov), presented in the part considering the proverbial worldview, I find it more suitable to be included in the next part - the one about the linguistic personality.

Antoaneta Nacheva considers Linguoculturology as a "type of discursive linguistics", a representative of the integral sciences (p. 46-47) and for the purposes of the study she also outlines the concept of discourse, further narrowing the examination to political discourse, which is the main object of her study. Before approaching the empirical research, however, the

dissertation also clarifies important specificities related to communicative behaviour and speech etiquette.

At the beginning of the second chapter, doctoral student Nacheva puts forward a kind of hypothesis, which, although not formulated as such, is clearly the basis of her research. Namely, that the speech behavior of the Bulgarian political elite "...is anything but part of high speech etiquette" (p. 59). This thesis is probably supported by own, as well as by observations of scientists who work in the field of public speaking such as Vl. Milanov.

At the beginning of the presentation of each of the political figures, she briefly presents his political career, as well as an analysis of the stated policies. This seemingly unnecessary information actually gives doctoral student Nacheva the opportunity, on the one hand, to set the basis for perceiving the speech of the relevant politician, and on the other hand, to highlight some lexemes and certain speech behavior in the context of these policies, which are in the basis of her research. Examines political speech, paying attention to frequently repeated words and expressions, the purpose of their use in political discourse, and specific features of the idiolect. The author interprets and discusses them within the framework of a discourse analysis with an emphasis on the linguistic (stylistic, pragmatic, phonetic, etc.) and cultural features of the speech of the political leaders. In fact, the second chapter of the dissertation with the way the presentation proceeds are a proof of A. Nacheva's right choice not to work according to a single model while presenting the speech of the elected politicians, but to pay attention to those speech features that are characteristics of every one of them. For example, the emphasis on the emotional speaking of Asen Vassilev and delineation of intonation and its components as an important aspect of persuasive communication is impressive. And this is fully justified, because realizations at the suprasegmental level are first of all perceived by the listeners and, accordingly, have a special impact on the audience.

Of great interest is the comparison between the speech behavior of elected political leaders, including the analysis of the influence of gender on speech in the section related to Cornelia Ninova. Another important topic is also touched upon - that of the increasingly distinct penetration of social networks as a field for political statements and discussions, and hence also for linguistic analysis (The part considering Slavi Trifonov`s speech).

The last tenth part of the second chapter, where speech behavior within a political debate is analyzed, is worth mentioning. Both phonetic markers, mostly related to intonation, as well as lexical, stylistic and pragmatic ones are highlighted and analyzed. Here, as an important

aspect of the research, the significance of the informational load in the speech of the two presidential candidates and its correlation with the above-mentioned factors, which Nacheva could deepen in the future, also emerges.

It is important to point out that one of the contributions of the dissertation researching the speech behavior of nine Bulgarian political leaders and two presidential candidates is actually the emphasis on the importance of public speaking. Public speaking sets patterns of speech behavior that, apparently, are reproduced over the years and are imposed in the speech etiquette that does not justify expectations of `high speech etiquette`.

The references are appropriately selected, and taking into account the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed research, the selection shows a good bibliographic awareness and an accurate orientation in the scientific sources so that they substantiate and motivate the exposition.

Recommendations

In the dissertation, there are some deviations from the main purpose of the text, such as that concerning ideology (pp. 105 – 111). I somewhat understand the position of doctoral student Nacheva and her desire to be exhaustive enough regarding the justification for the election of Yavor Bozhankov and the position expressed through his speech in contrast to the ideology of the party. Anyway I find that all this could have been achieved in a concise text form. There are similar deviations, albeit on the subject, and further on (See the section dedicated to K. Kostadinov), related to political speech in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. The latter is justified thematically, but it would have been quite enough just to introduce Kostadin Kostadinov's speech into the analysis with proper references, citations and juxtapositions.

The exposition does not lack some inaccuracies, as well as repetitions in the text, including the quoted one (See p. 91 and p. 164 - citation according to M. Tsvetkova, 1996), but in general the reading style makes an impression, which maintains interest and unfolds consistently new and emerging aspects of research.

I believe that the text should be published (with proper editing and proofreading, including citations and references, before printing) because I am deeply convinced that the

research would be of interest to both academics and the wider public readers, and hopefully, politicians and their publicists.

The points of contribution indicated in the dissertation fully correspond to what was achieved through the analysis. The abstract also presents the content of the dissertation in a synthesized form.

Given the stated in this opinion and taking into account the presented dissertation work and scientific research I give confidently my positive assessment and recommend to the esteemed members of the Academic Board to award Antoaneta Nacheva the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”.

16th of May 2024

Accos. Prof. Gergana Padareva-Ilieva, PhD