



OPINION

from Prof. Dr. Diana Petkova.....

(scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution)

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences.

with a dissertation on the topic: "Language reform policies and their reflection in the Bulgarian media: reconstruction of the culturally sensitive language resource based on media practice",

presented by Alexander Miglenov Georgiev....., full-time doctoral student in the Press Journalism and Book Publishing Chair..... of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Dr.Sc. Andreana Eftimova.....

I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of the dissertation

The presented dissertation by doctoral student Alexander Georgiev is dedicated to a topic that has not been sufficiently developed in the research field of communication science in Bulgaria. The issue of culturally sensitive language resources is not only relevant and interesting, but also concerns linguistic, social and cultural practices in society, which until recently were not given enough attention. Of particular importance is the emphasis on language as a tool for regulating social relations and constructing identities. The dissertation analyzes language reform policies related to 3 social groups: women, Roma and LGBT people. In relation to women, the use of feminine names is examined, which remains debatable to this day. In relation to Roma, endo- and exonymic terms for naming them have been studied. In relation to the LGBT community, the emphasis is placed on the designation of persons with non-binary gender identity, which is becoming a serious challenge for languages with grammatical gender. Both the subject of this study and the in-depth analysis testify to an innovative dissertation work with a significant contribution in the field of media style and language.

The dissertation is correctly structured in five main chapters. In the first chapter, the subject of research is the construction of linguistic reality. Various theories have been presented - from the idealistic and metaphysical doctrines of Plato and Charles Peirce to contemporary concepts, such as the ones of Rorty, Holmes, Wilson, Sapir and Whorf, Barthes, Derrida. The views of the Bulgarian



researchers - Nitsolova, Tsanov, Vodenicharov, etc. have not been ignored either. The emphasis is placed on the role of the cultural context and, in the spirit of Edward Hall, it is emphasized that the same message can be decoded differently in different cultures. A particularly good impression is made by the fact that the theoretical analysis also emphasizes the importance of the theory of the face in communication. The different concepts of hate speech and the language of political correctness as its counterpoint have been analyzed. Based on all the theories presented, a conclusion can be drawn about the in-depth knowledge and comprehensiveness of the study of theoretical sources.

Chapter two is dedicated to the role of language in the construction of social identities, with a special emphasis on language policies. Different approaches to the study of identity problems have been presented, but the author defines the social-constructivist approach as the most relevant one. The role of the media and the media discourse of identity is another important topic discussed in the second chapter. The conclusion is reached that in terms of the content, the Roma ethnic group is overrepresented in the media compared to the other ethnic groups in the country, and the explanation for this is found in the concept of moral panic. Chapter three focuses on media content and its impact on the audience. A number of studies have been devoted to the discrepancies between social reality and media reality. Such are the acculturation theory, the agenda-setting theory, as well as the theory of attitudes, which are examined in details. The distinction between public and private is interpreted in the context of Habermas's theory of public dialogue and consensus.

The fourth chapter focuses on the research methods and presents the advantages of content analysis. In particular, discourse analysis is preferred. The dissertation examines a period of 14 years, paying attention to the observed changes in lexical and thematic terms. In order to verify the results, the discourse analysis is combined with a corpus study of media texts. The sources for data collection are the websites of nine Bulgarian media, and various software packages have been used for the analysis. The final fifth chapter presents the results of the empirical study. The data clearly demonstrate that with regard to the Roma, the most frequently exploited topics in the media are intolerance and lack of integration, the education of the Roma community in Bulgaria, as well as the high crime rate in it. One of the important conclusions of the doctoral student is that in the studied period there is a decrease of the number of publications that address ethnic conflicts. This fact is interpreted as a positive trend for the Bulgarian media, which will most likely lead to the normalization of the image of the Roma. The study of the media coverage of gender identities is also particularly interesting, since the neutral designation of gender in speech is a problem for language policies that seek to reduce linguistic or speech discrimination. Thirdly, the corpus studies are aimed at the so-called non-binary gender identities, or these are the people who do not want to be classified as either male or female. Based on the data obtained for these three groups, Alexander Georgiev comes to the conclusion that "the reconstruction of culturally sensitive language in media texts proves impossible, since there are no consistent policies for correct coverage" (p. 197). At the same time, however, the results largely confirm the preliminary hypothesis of the study – that, albeit slowly, the language of political correctness is gradually being imposed in the Bulgarian media. The bibliography contains 186 main titles and demonstrates the author's very good knowledge. The



abstract meets the requirements and corresponds to the text of the dissertation. Finally, the high precision of the style and expression of the dissertation should be noted.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

Alexander Georgiev continues with honor the research line of his academic supervisor – Prof. Dr. Andreana Eftimova. Among the contributions of the dissertation, I will emphasize once again the choice of a problem that has not been sufficiently developed in the Bulgarian communication science. I also completely agree with the contributions that the doctoral student has himself outlined at the end of his dissertation. The new phenomenon of “non-binary language” for the Bulgarian language has been analyzed, and the huge corpus of media texts included in the research testifies to a serious and in-depth dissertation work, which has both theoretical and practical significance in the research field of media language and style.

III. Notes and recommendations

I recommend Alexander Georgiev to publish his dissertation as a monograph and I wish him to continue working diligently in the scientific field chosen by him.

IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Alexander Georgiev has proposed the required number of publications and participation in forums required for the defense of a doctoral dissertation. Thus, the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the approval and publication of the results of the study according to Art. 5, item 5 have been met and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and Art. 69, para. 3 have been met.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exceptional relevance, innovation, as well as the scale of the research in the proposed dissertation give me the reason to vote positively for Alexander Georgiev to be granted the educational and scientific degree "doctor" (PhD).

Jury member:

Date: 2.03.2025

Prof. Dr. Diana Petkova