REVIEW

of the scientific production of Assoc. prof. Neli Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva, Dr. Habil, the only candidate in the competition for the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education "Humanities”, professional filed 2.1. Philology (Cognitive Linguistics – Text and Discourse Analysis (English)), announced in SG no. 24/17/03/2023

**Procedure and documentation**

The documentation is in full working order and meets all the requirements of the Law on Scientific Degrees and Titles and the New Regulations on the Terms and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Sofia University.

I confirm that I have been provided with all the necessary documents and materials for the purposes of a competition for the position of "professor" at SU and that they fully comply with the requirements of LSDT (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Terms and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and for Holding Academic Positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". I also confirm that the set of materials presented by the candidate includes all the necessary documents for the procedure.

I confidently declare that, according to the report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under the LSDT (ZRASRB) in all three groups of indicators, the candidate confidently fulfills the minimum requirements.

**Bio data for the candidate**

Assoc. prof. Neli Tincheva, Dr. Habil. completed her higher education in the period 1990-1995 at the Department of English and American Studies and graduated with a Master’s degree. I will not comment on Associate Professor Tincheva’s work, which is not related to Sofia University, and includes positions as assistant director and translator. Associate Professor Tincheva’s work at the Department of English and American Studies dates back to 1995, when she won an assistantship competition. In 2006, she defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic *The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema in political speeches* in the scientific field “Germanic languages”, code: 04.05.20. Having gone through all the stages of her scientific and teaching career as an assistant professor and chief assistant professor, in 2015 she qualified as an associate professor at Sofia University.

**Evaluation of the candidate’s professional experience and activities**

From the curriculum vitae and the attached reference from the SU information system, it transpires that Associate Professor Tincheva has led numerous courses at the bachelor’s degree level and two at the master’s degree level in various areas of linguistics - from text linguistics and discourse analysis to practical grammar - a total of 13 courses developed alone or as a member of a team.

In parallel with her teaching activity, Associate Professor Tincheva has participated in numerous national and international projects – a total of 10 projects through the years. She has also participated in a number of scientific fora at home and abroad at which she has delivered a total of 23 papers.

Prof. Tincheva is a member of a number of international and national scientific organizations, functions as a reviewer of international scientific journals and series in prestigious publications. Performs administrative duties as head of the linguistic section at the Department of English and American Studies.

**Evaluation of the candidate's scientific output**

Before I review and evaluate the scientific activity of associate prof. Tincheva, I will allow myself one recommendation, namely that the reference for publications be arramged by genre, that is, reviews should be separated from articles, studies and monographs, which would make it much easier for everyone examining her work.

It would also have been nice if the candidate had indicated with some sign the publications that were consumed for the recent defense of a dissertation for the awarding of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science". Also, in the professional resume, it is advisable to note the conferences at which the papers were presented, in addition to the titles of the papers themselves or instead of them. Because of the way the publications are presented in the requisite reference list, I am unable to provide quantitative assessment on them here (the list is available to interested parties).

In the diverse publication and scientific activity of Associate Professor Tincheva, several unifying thematic fields stand out: Discursive and textual worlds with their respective functions, political discourse, figurativeness (as a structuring component of human thinking in general, of the profiling of discursive and textual worlds, of political speeches and many other types of human activity) and language blunders. Thematic fields overlap and create a motley web through which the complex relationship between human knowledge, thinking and all human activity is ultimately explored.

If a monograph has to be singled out to serve the purposes of the competition, then this should be the monograph ***Language Gaffes. Linguistic, Discursive and Cognitive Aspects of ‘Language Bloopers’***.

The monograph explores a communicative phenomenon that is little represented in scientific circles - linguistic blunders. Linguistic blunders are a universal phenomenon and everyone can relate to them. It is this fact that makes them extremely interesting and entertaining for everyone but linguists. As Tincheva points out, there is no generally accepted classification of the types of language mistakes.

It is even less clear what we would call a linguistic blunder as opposed to a linguistic error, especially in the case of foreign speakers. The author fully approves of the low-differentiating term in Bulgarian, “bloopers”, which, in addition to a low degree of subcategorical differentiation, is also characterized by a certain degree of evaluation. Besides the lack of consensus regarding the identification and classification of linguistic blunders, the question of the intentional or absolutely uncontrollable production of linguistic blunders, as well as their communicative effect and cognitive motivation, remains controversial.

The main aim of the research is the search for answers to the following research questions: Why do linguists have a condescending and even dismissive attitude towards linguistic mistakes? Are these linguistic manifestations few and insignificant? and Are not these blunders informative of the system whose existence warrants their occurrence?

Although she acknowledges the lack of literature on the problems of language errors (as opposed to linguistic errors in language learning), Tincheva motivates her choice of approach, namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the comprehensive nature of the study of a phenomenon for whose in-depth analysis it is necessary to take into account at least the following factors - cognitive, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and purely linguistic (including phonological, morphological, lexical-semantic and syntactic). Among the variety of branches, schools and models within CAD, the author chooses van Dijk's sociocognitive discourse analysis (SCDA), presented in scholarly publications in the period 1990 – 2017 as her main analytical framework. Among the many scientific paradigms describing discourse analysis, which have changed several times in recent decades, with the aim of covering as adequately as possible this very complex object of research, SKDA stands out with its focus on linguistic manifestations as invariably motivated by mental models, unique to the speaker, in which knowledge is intertwined with beliefs, evaluative attitudes, opinions, stereotypes and language, discourse and communication skills. The author of the work reviewed here applies precisely this model of analysis in all its diversity and complexity. Key to this type of analysis is an understanding of mental models as mediators between established social structures of any type and discursive behavior.

Quite naturally, bloopers, or errors of language, whether they are unintentional stumbling blocks or purposefully pursued communicative strategies, are quite indicative of the mental patterns that give rise to them. In this sense, these linguistic manifestations can be used as a magnifying glass to the mental models with which they are inevitably connected. Thus, with a light tone, in a funny style and in the form of an engaging readable narrative, Tincheva manages to present serious, problematic linguistic fields, promising with their insufficient representation in the linguistic literature and intriguing in their diversity.

Associate prof. Tincheva proposes a classification of linguistic blunders and analyzes them as socially and cognitively motivated linguistic manifestations. The study is based on the analysis of a corpus of 350 language errors, 80% of which are clear to the speaker who produced the blooper, and 20% of which are excerpted from student essays, exam papers and homework assignments, the authors of which are anonymous. By applying a mixed methodology that includes qualitative and quantitative analyses, the author of the study investigates the frequency, typology and essence of bloopers by applying a linguistic and discursive network of indicators for their classification. The parameter of intentionality ~ randomness is also taken into account. The author shows that language classification based on an error in a unit characterizing a given language level is independent of the intentionality factor. More important is the finding that unintentional language blunders are far more frequent than purposeful bloopers. The only exception are intentional bloopers as a result of word formation, synonymy and polysemy, which is directly related to wordplay in the intentional production of bloopers and the communicative purposes for which this strategy is applied. Related to the intentionality parameter is the finding regarding the perception of linguistic blunders. Based on a survey of native speakers, the author concludes that intentional bloopers are perceived as marked, even exaggerated, by the respondents. The unexpected conclusion reached by the author in the analysis of the data is also intriguing, namely that the characteristic "funny" is essential for the unified recognition of linguistic blunders as bloopers. The degree of funniness is decisive for the liking of the blunders on the part of the perceivers. The analysis of the data from this study also leads to the conclusion that lay people (non-linguists) unanimously recognize blunders as characteristic of the sphere of public discourse and the media.

No less interesting is the analysis presented in Chapter 4, where the focus is on the cognitive construction of language blunders through the disruption of cognitive models for political discourse and political relationships, either through the inappropriate filling/realization of roles/slots in political cognitive models or due to the establishment of impermissible connections in the implementation of roles in the models in question.

In a second, independent study, presented again in chapter 4, the author presents the perception of blunders from a linguistic perspective in terms of three scalar criteria: a) pronunciation errors; b) ridiculousness of the blunder and c) difficulty of perception. The analysis of the obtained data necessitates the conclusion that the three factors are independent and no correlation is established between wrongness and difficulty of perception. Although negative results (the lack of connection between the parameters) are equally valid and informative scientific conclusions, the author tries to find a reason for these results and introduces a new parameter in the study - the variability of the conceptual or purely linguistic character of the linguistic blunder. It turns out that linguistic models have an advantage over purely cognitive ones with regard to the wrongness parameter, while the exact opposite dependence is observed for the funniness parameter - as blunders based on violations of cognitive models, rather than linguistic ones, are considered funnier by the respondents. The distinction between purely linguistic and cognitive types of blunders is confirmed by another study presented at the end of the chapter. This time, the research participants are philology students, sophomores. Тhe aim of this somewhat replicative survey is to check whether there will be no change in the evaluation of the types of blunders by perceivers with heightened linguistic awareness. Although clearly registering and duly reporting the differences between the two types of blunders, respondents who are not familiar with the statements of cognitive linguistics, with their answers to the questions and with the performance of the tasks ((a) isolation of the error; (b) correcting the error and (c) self-reported correction success rate and reporting time for doing so) show that purely linguistic blunders require far less time to correct the error and lead to higher correction success rates and efficiency. At the end of the chapter, Tincheva presents a study in which 100 philologists in training, familiar with basic concepts of cognitive science, classified the types of errors in 25 examples of linguistic blunders. The results of the analysis of the data collected in the last study lead the author to the following conclusions: 1) there are clearly two types of blunders - purely linguistic and cognitive, but 2) these two types do not form a clearly defined dichotomy, but rather outline the two endpoints of a scalar difference. In summarizing the data collected and the conducted analyses, Tincheva concludes that the classification and description of linguistic facts is difficult precisely because of the strictly scalar nature of their defining characteristics, amalgamating imperceptibly with human cognition.

The last chapter is devoted to the differences between the bloopers of two American presidents - George Bush and Donald Trump. In complementation of her findings about the two main types of language blunders – purely linguistic and cognitive ones – the author establishes, based on data collected from respondents, that Bushisms are balanced in relation to the cognitive-linguistic scale, while the cognitive type prevails in Trumpisms.

If we return at the end of the book to the research questions posed at the beginning, we will find the following answers: linguists should pay the deserved attention to linguistic blunders because, although peripheral linguistic manifestations, they are of an extremely complex nature and require a complex analytical apparatus that minimally includes cognitive, linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and discursive approaches. In terms of frequency, at least at the ideolectal level, linguistic blunders are far from few. Their study inevitably leads to an analysis of the complex and inextricably, but analytically separable, relationship between language and consciousness.

The pleasure of reading this text is granted both by the nature of the object of study and by the nonchalant style that masks serious questions and in-depth answers.

A similar problem is considered in the thematically related article Language blunders and language games as “mistakes” and “jokes”, where the author distinguishes two types of “bloopers” - unintentional language blunders and humorous language games that aim to imitate unintentional ones. After analyzing the two types, the researcher comes to the conclusion that language errors and language games imitating language errors differ, but not enough to be considered two separate cognitive and discourse phenomena.

The other main thematic field in the scientific work of associate professor Tincheva - political discourse, is represented in the following articles: *The Facebook status update - a Bulgarian political discourse genre; The Facebook status update - a Bulgarian political discourse genre; Facebook posts as performatives in Bulgarian political life: A sociolinguistic investigation; Profiling and conceptual metaphor: Elections in Bulgarian political discourse; Good Brexit, Bad Brexit: Evaluation through metaphoric conceptualizations in British media; и A Bulgarian president’s speech: culture-specific or globally-apt?.* The articles problematize the concepts of “political discourse”, “genre” and “text type”, applying the cognitive principles of prototype analysis. The analyses are based on quantitative data, focusing on entire genres, not just specific texts. The comprehensiveness of the research is complemented by results of sociolinguistic studies based on questionnaires and involving actual users of the language. Among the research questions, what stands out is how the Bulgarian political public interprets the concept of “political action”, defending the hypothesis that there are two main concepts (“action” and “performing”), which are fundamental for modern interpretations of “political action”, and that these two concepts should be approached through quantitative data analysis regarding perceptions of actual respondents and how the Bulgarian political public views political genres in the current “post-truth reality”. The results of surveys concerning the expectations of Bulgarian recipients regarding the communicative and political effect of their posts on Facebook are systematized and discussed. The results reveal that the Bulgarian political public perceives Facebook posts not simply as a genre in the Bulgarian political discourse, but also as an action in real contemporary political life. Apart from their thematic similarity, this set of articles is united by the analytical unity followed by the author, namely the analysis of conceptual structures underlying the texts in political discourse and in the cognitive processing of political discourse texts by those who perceive them.

The next broad thematic field can be unified under the title of one of the articles that populate the field - Textual worlds and discourse worlds: profiling and particularities. The unifying analytical center of these publications (11 in number) is the search and analysis of cognitive mechanisms (among which the conceptual metaphor stands out), which help to profile and distinguish discourse from textual worlds. It is argued that an existing metaphorical mapping present in both kinds of world is what can lead to the worlds overlapping and merging. For the first time, the theory of worlds is combined with the cognitive principle of Gestalt profiling, i.e., with the dynamic action of figure-background in the two kinds of world and with the theory of conceptual metaphors and the theory of conceptual blending. A cognitive theoretical model of teaching political writing is proposed and the application of this model, based on the analysis of frames and frame slots, for the teaching of writing in university programs is demonstrated. The articles contribute to the modern understanding of “text type”, “text structure” and “genre” by combining those contemporary views with the aims of teaching text types and genres.

Among the publications of associate prof. Tincheva are also training materials and teaching aids in grammar and text linguistics, which only confirms the organic fusion of teaching and research activities in the professional path of associate prof. Tincheva.

**Conclusion**

Much more can be written about the research, teaching and scientific activity of associate professor Neli Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva, but what has been said so far gives me the sufficient reason to confidently propose to the esteemed scientific jury to elect Associate Professor Tincheva to the academic position of "professor" in the field of higher education "Humanities" by professional direction 2.1. Philology (Cognitive Linguistics – Text and Discourse Analysis (English)).

Date: 19 June 2023 Signature: