OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Nedelcheva, PhD, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen

Regarding the application of the following candidate for the academic position of PROFESSOR, according to the Bulgarian legislation in Area of Higher Education 2. Humanities in Professional Field 2.1. Philology (Linguistics – Cognitive Linguistics and Word formation (English language)). The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette 48/ 28 June 2022.

Candidate: Assoc. prof. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, PhD

1. Areas of scholarly interests of the candidate

Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva graduated from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with a master's degree in English philology, a teacher of English language and literature, and a specialization in linguistics and translation. Immediately after that, she became a part-time lecturer and full-time doctoral student at the Department of English and American Studies of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies at Sofia University. In 2004, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation and in the same year became "assistant professor". She was promoted to the academic position of Associate Professor in 2012, and during her academic growth she went through a number of specializations oriented to the preparation and use of teaching materials suitable for a flipped classroom and electronic environment.

The list of candidate's publications shows that her research interests are related to cognitive linguistics and word formation in English and Bulgarian. For this procedure she has submitted thirteen publications (1 monograph, 3 chapters of monographs, 4 studies and 5 articles), only one of which is in Bulgarian, all others are in English. They have been published in specialized journals, collective monographs and peer-reviewed collections, four of which are indexed in Web of Science and/or Scopus.

2. Evaluation of candidate's teaching experience

In her research, Alexandra Bagasheva uses the comparative approach, which makes it applicable in her teaching work with foreign language learners. The author uses the results for a more accessible presentation of word formation in the educational process. They can be used by BA and MA students in English Philology and Applied Linguistics who are pre-service English language teachers. In addition, the candidate participated (in co-authorship) in the preparation of four booklets with tests for the English matriculation exam and sample tests for English language Olympiads.

3. Evaluation of candidate's research

Alexandra Bagasheva's major contribution to research is her habilitation work "Prototypes, metonymy and word formation". Sofia: Polis Publishers, 2022.

This book is organized in eight chapters, preceded by a preface and followed by an afterword. The bibliography contains over 400 titles, of which only 19 are by Bulgarian authors. Although the title mentions word formation in general, the focus is on compound words, but also on metonymy, prototypes and iconicity. Most research in this area relies on the traditional syntagmatic and paradigmatic approaches, but here the author examines a new, different approach, which defines words as actions. The theoretical framework of the monograph includes cognitive linguistics, constructional grammar, constructional approaches to language, and psycholinguistic studies of compound words.

The author uses the concept of "human ecology" to denote the dynamic interactions of people with everything that surrounds them, starting from the biological characteristics of the body and its existence in the sociocultural environment and ending with all the complex cognitive phenomena that make up the semiotic continuum in the human ecosystem. Thus, the study of language is reduced to studying the relationship between experience, the conceptual system and the semantic structure encoded in language in the processes of constructing meaning and using it in context. The construction of meaning leads to constructions – patterns that persist and are entrenched through processes of conventionalization. The term "constructivism" is a generalization and encompasses various strands in constructionist approaches that, with the exception of some details, share the notion that construction is a basic model of what might be called linguistic structure.

Assoc. Prof. Bagasheva pays particular attention to prototypes and iconicity, as well as to metonymy in the word formation of compounds. She uses those aspects of prototype theory that can be useful in many areas of grammar and lexicon, as well as in linguistic conceptualization, such as internal category structures and family resemblances. What can be inferred from the use of the concept of prototype as a model of a linguistic category is that any deviation from the prototype is based on similarity or resemblance. A certain number of characteristics are often assigned to the prototype that is considered the best example or central member of category.

The author considers paradigmaticity and metonymy from the point of view of word formation, and the concept of iconicity plays a major role in reduplicative compounds, but more importantly, it is the basis of analogy as an explanatory mechanism for the linguistic behavior of speakers. The interconnectedness between paradigms and analogy is further demonstrated by the fact that the role of analogy is central to the organization of paradigms. An example of onomatological realizations of metonymic relations are verbocentric compounds in Bulgarian and English. In both languages, verbocentric substantive compound words show great variability in terms of semantic endo/exocentricity. The candidate comes to the conclusion that metonymy, understood as a dynamic conceptualizing mechanism, is a

formal cognitive operation without which the creation of compounds is not possible. Word-forming metonymy is always active when making sense of compounds and word combinations. In addition to verbocentric substantive compound words, she also examines substantive compounds with modified roots in the Bulgarian language, reduplicative compound words in Bulgarian and English and compound English verbs. The most controversial among these are the reduplicatives as there is a dispute as to whether they should be regarded as compound words or, in the case of partial reduplication, the replicant should be considered a special type of affix. Assoc. Prof. Bagasheva adheres to the theory that reduplication is closer to the composition of compounds than to affixation. She comes to the conclusion that all reduplicative constructions in the Bulgarian (and English) language can be defined as special types of co-compound words, while copulative compounds in both languages have other types of members. In other words, when recognizing reduplicative constructions as compounds, the need for a distinction between process and product arises again, which does not affect the status of reduplicative constructions as a lexical class in either Bulgarian or English.

In Alexandra Bagasheva's research, the articles related to the word formation of composites stand out. She studies them on the morphological and semantic level, adding an interpretation from the point of view of cultural conceptualization. Some of them refer to human beings as well as parts of the human body (mouth, lips, tongue, teeth). Series of metonymies and conceptual-metaphorical projections in the language practices of Bulgarian and English culture are analyzed. I am particularly interested in the article co-authored by Hristo Stamenov, which examines the creation of nonce words. The corpus of research is the latest rendition in Bulgarian of four of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, where the authors examine the blurred line between word play and creativity in word formation. The analysis critically approaches the productivity of rules and models, as well as individual formants in word-formation processes. It is pointed out that analogy as a cognitive mechanism used in word formation cancels the opposition between productivity and creativity, especially in interlingual translation, where the translator's creativity plays a major role.

4. Evaluation of candidate's contributions

The candidate's research contributions are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to the description of the conceptual structure in cognitive linguistics and the main approaches within this theory. In practice, the results of her research will help others understand how metonymy works as a formal cognitive operation in the configuration of the meaning of compounds. As a final goal, in the future her habilitation thesis can serve as a basis for building a methodology for the study of word-formation processes of compounds in different languages using a specific type of metonymy, which the candidate defines as "a formal cognitive operation within the framework of an onomasiological approach to word formation".

With regard to the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of Professor, the candidate has exceeded the quantitative indicators in all criteria. In addition to

the monograph and the articles that study compounds in English and Bulgarian, Assoc. Prof. Bagasheva has presented fourteen citations, six of them are in articles indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, and twelve are published abroad. All of them show that her research has received recognition in the scientific circles in Bulgaria and abroad. She participated in international and national scientific and educational projects; she was the head of one of the international projects. She supervised two doctoral students who successfully defended their theses, one in 2016 and the other in 2022. Evidence of the applied aspects of her work are the English-Bulgarian dictionary (2003/2017) (co-author Maya Pencheva), as well as the published series of test collections I have mentioned earlier.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the submitted research papers, their significance, the scientific, practical and applied contributions contained therein, I find it reasonable to propose the candidate Assoc. Prof. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva to take the academic position of Professor at the Department of English and American Studies of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the professional field 2.1 Philology (General Linguistics – Cognitive Linguistics and Word Formation (English Language)).

25 October 2022   Signature:

/Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Nedelcheva, PhD/