**EVALUATIVE OUTLOOK**

**by assoc. prof. Rositsa Ishpekova, PhD, Department of English and American Studies, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia,** regarding the Dr. habil. dissertation for awarding the Dr. habil. in philology degree in the professional field 2.1 philology.Author: assoc. prof. Nelly Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva. Topic: **A multi-process cognitive model for investigating text and discourse.**

1. **General description of the submitted materials**

By virtue of order№ 38-120/10.03.2023 of the Rector of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Prof. Dr. habil. Anastas Gerdzhikov, I was appointed member of the scientific jury set up to ensure a procedure for the defense of a Dr. habil. dissertation on the topic **A multi-process cognitive model for investigating text and discourse** for the award of the Dr. habil. degree in the higher education field 2. humanitarian sciences**,** professional field 2.1 philology.

Author of the Dr. habil. dissertation is assoc. prof. Nelly Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva, PhD, university lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. The materials submitted by the author encompass all documents necessary for the procedure, namely: CV, copy of the diploma for an obtained PhD degree, diploma for an MA degree in English philology, Dr. habil. dissertation in English, author’s synthesis of the Dr. habil. dissertation in Bulgarian and English, declaration on the originality of the submitted Dr. habil. dissertation, reference on meeting the minimal national requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and a list of publications related to the Dr. habil. dissertation for obtaining the Dr. habil. degree.

1. **Brief biographical information about the candidate**

Nelly Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva became a student in the English philology major in 1990, successfully graduating in 1995 with an interpreter’s specialization and a defended MA thesis on the topic *Gender, speech and cultural myths*. While studying at the university, she worked as an interpreter (in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation and in written translation) at the Tinform firm (1992-1994). In the period July 1994 – March 1995 she was assistant-director at Sneak Preview Entertainment.

Assoc. prof. Nelly Todorova Tincheva-Georgieva, PhD, is a well-established specialist and respected colleague at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. She became a full-time lecturer at the department in 1995, and was assistant professor until 1999, after that she was promoted as a senior assistant professor, a position she held until 2005. In the period 2005 – 2015 she was senior lecturer and since 2015 she has been associate professor in text linguistics and discourse analysis. In March 2006 she became a PhD after successfully defending a PhD thesis on the topic *The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema in political speeches*. Scientific specialty Germanic languages, code 05.04.20.

1. **Topicality of the research and expediency of the set goals and tasks**

The topic of the research is of particular relevance, given the rapid development of text linguistics and discourse analysis, which we have been witnessing in the past years and which logically led to the emergence of new theoretical models. The model that the Dr. habil. applicant has constructed - namely a multi-process cognitive model – runs through and is tested in all chapters of the dissertation. The term *model* is used in the dissertation to denote a multi-process set of simultaneously functioning cognitive mechanisms.

The structure of the dissertation meets all requirements of a Dr. habil. thesis: it is comprised of an introduction, in which the research object is clearly defined, as well as the research questions the author has set, the approach and method utilized by assoc. prof. Tincheva and the datasets she analyzes, part I (comprised of two chapters), part II (also comprised of two chapters), part III (four chapters) and a conclusion. The main objective of the dissertation has also been clearly identified – to contribute to the theoretical assumption of the overlap of four spheres of action and analysis, related to TEXT and DISCOURSE. The two concepts are interpreted in the dissertation as ensuing from cognitive processes and as related to basic cognitive principles.

 As the author justifiably argues, the thesis seeks to contribute to the scholarly understanding of “the rich ecology of minds in action” (Gibbs 2022: 65). As a consequence, the thesis draws not only on cognitive, but also on sociolinguistic tools in conducting the research in question. The latter is one of the greatest merits of the thesis – conducting questionnaire-based studies with respondents.

1. **Knowledge of the problem**

The author is undoubtedly well versed in the problems of the research, given the rich professional experience she has in teaching and studying the issues pertaining to the questions of the cognitive analysis of text and discourse. The thesis Nelly Tincheva-Georgieva has written is directly connected with her work as a university lecturer and her year-long career development at the Department of English and American Studies, where the discussed terminology and the related problems are part of her daily professional activity. In this respect the offered thesis has a solid empirical basis and in its very nature is a product of a scholar that has grown to maturity in her academic practice.

1. **Methodology of the research**

Various research methods have been employed in working out the Dr. habil. dissertation – theoretical and methodological analysis, method of questionnaire-based studies with respondents, empirical analysis, method of analysis and synthesis.

1. **Characteristics and assessment of the thesis**

The greatest merit of the thesis is the extraction of the multi-process cognitive model, which is isolated in all chapters. **Chapter two**, *Extracting the model*, aims to isolate the cognitive mechanisms the functioning of which explains the multi-functioning of the texts of political speeches. After acquiring data from real native speakers, by conducting two questionnaire-based studies separated by a decade, N. Tincheva reaches the conclusion that in the case of POLITICAL SPEECHES, the metaphoric transfer from the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema is triple and evident in all three types of Worlds. In the TW, it controls the unfolding of ‘the story’. In the RW, it metaphorizes LIFE as A JOURNEY. Together with conceptual metonymy, it serves to profile a DW as a STEP along the PATH of LIFE.

**Chapter three** also proves the presence of the modelby focusing onthe terminological and conceptualdiversitysurrounding the notion of WHOLE-TEXT STRUCTURE. The investigation isolates six major terms used throughout the literature to refer to a structure which ‘runs across’ a whole text, or which ‘holds’ a whole text ‘together’: ‘rhetorical structure’, ‘narrative structure’, ‘text structure’, ‘overall structure’, ‘superstructure’ and ‘macrostructure’ and each of the concepts functions metonymically by evoking different facets of WHOLE-TEXT STRUCTURE. A major contribution is the generalization that a whole text’s structure can employ either principles of World sequencing, principles of World conflation, or any mixture of the two and either of the two cognitive mechanisms can co-function with conceptual metaphor to create the impression of step-by-step MOVEMENT through a TEXT.

**Chapter four** answers the question of which theories can function as background to the application of the proposed multi-process model by carrying out meta-analysis of academic works/discourses in text linguistics (TL), above all those of de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) and Halliday and Hasan (1976). What further impresses is that Nelly Tincheva is well-grounded in these works and also critically interprets them. Assoc. prof. Tincheva-Georgieva also provides a re-definition of the field of TL: in addition to metaphtonymizations of TEXT as a PHYSICAL PRODUCT, as a COGNITIVE PRODUCT, or as a system of text-related COGNITIVE PROCESSES, TL is characterized by conflation and profiling switches enacted on text-centered textual aspects (cohesion, coherence) and user-centered textual aspects (intentionality, acceptability, informativity and situationality). The metaphtonymyzation is demonstrated to operate simultaneously through World profiling shifts.

**Chapter five,** just as Chapter four**,** discusseswhich theories can function as background to the application of the multi-process model proposed in the thesis. The chapter provides meta-analysis of so far existing academic works in discourse analysis (DA). It supports the generalization that, in DA, the predominant underlying metaphtonymyzation of TEXT, DISCOURSE and SOCIETY/ CULTURE is the representation of them as a progression in terms of concentric geometric spaces of increasing scope. The metaphtonymyzation is demonstrated to operate simultaneously through World profiling shifts.

**Chapter six** employs the multi-process model and distinguishes theoretically between ‘context’, ‘DW’, ‘user-centered parameters’, ‘communicative environment’, etc. It further advances the understanding of the multi-process model by providing evidence for the operation of TW-DW-RW overlapping and coincidence. Moreover, it provides evidence for the overlapping and coincidence of more than one World of a type, for example, overlapping of two TWs with a RW and the explanation of this cognitive phenomenon is in the profiling and scope variation specifics. The chapter above all pays attention to the fact that a DW and a RW co-operate through conceptual metonymy.

After the conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis of Brexit, with the participation of respondents from different nationalities, **Chapter seven** advances the understandings that (a) a ‘RW’ and ‘reality’ are different notions, and (b) that a DW and a RW co-operate through conceptual metonymy. The chapter also argues that the use of figurativity in mediated discourse can be used as a measure of the degree to which a concept is interpreted as ‘real’, i.e. as part of a RW. The chapter also supports the fact that, within the analyzed period of time, a preference for inanimate source domains characterizes both UK and non-UK EU media uses: BERXIT is more frequently metaphorized as DIVORCE, A NATURAL DISASTER and PART OF A JOURNEY; in UK media, the JOURNEY, DISASTER and WAR metaphoric conceptualizations prevail. In non-UK EU media, MECHANICAL FAILURE is more prominent.

**Chapter eight** employs quantitative methods to analyze Facebook publications. Two studies have been precisely conducted, which prove that Facebook gradually ‘enters’ RWs. Thus the chapter contributes to studies of cognitive phenomena in context, and especially to studies of discourse as (social) action, thus positioning the present investigation close to research on human cognitive ecologies. Another contribution of the chapter is the notion of intra-domain activation as intra-World profiling and metonymy. The chapter supports the possibility for conceptual metonymic overlap and the ensuing conceptual coincidence between a DW and a RW to be so extensive that the DW and the RW become integrated into a conceptual gestalt. On the basis of the data obtained, the conclusion is reached that the Facebook post and the debate are the only two genres which are seen as so communicatively efficient as to represent actual political action(s). The data in the presented in the chapter studies show that in the pre-pandemic period, people primarily used Facebook socio-politically to *debate a socio-political issue* and *exchange socio-political information.* In the quarantine period, people used Facebook primarily to *debate a socio-political issue* and *motivate others into socio-political (in)action*. In the social-distancing period, people used Facebook primarily to *motivate others into socio-political (in)action* and *debate a socio-political issue*. Overall, the data obtained reveal that the tendency across the three periods is for people increasingly to perceive Facebook use as a non-virtual-world activity. Another contribution of Chapter VIII is its employing the multi-process model to provide re-definitions of ‘text type’ and ‘genre’.

**The last chapter** draws precise conclusionson the basis of thecomprehensive and deep analysis.

1. **Assessment of the publications related to the Dr. habil. thesis**

The candidate has submitted a total of four scientific publications on the topic of the Dr. habil. thesis. Three of them are in journals indexed in SCOPUS, and one is in print. The publications are related to the topic of the Dr. habil. thesis and show that the studies conducted by assoc. prof. Tincheva-Georgieva have been sufficiently disseminated among the academic and professional community. What impresses is also the great number of the applicant’s publications since the award of the position of associate professor – 38, all of which are related to the fields of text linguistics and discourse analysis.

1. **Assessment of meeting the minimal national requirements**

The submitted reference on meeting the minimal national requirements for obtaining the Dr. habil. degree shows that the applicant not only meets the requirements but also exceeds them. She has a total of 69 publications. Apart from the submitted Dr. habil. thesis, she has a published monograph that has not been presented as a basic Dr. habil. thesis, and a published chapter of a collective monograph. What impresses is the great number of publications in scientific editions indexed in reference index research journals, among which are three scientific studies. She has participated in national and international projects, and has also published a university textbook and a university teaching aid.

1. **Personal participation of the Dr. habil. applicant**

There is full evidence that the candidate has written the Dr. habil. dissertation on her own. It is a result of her exploration of the problems closely related to her professional experience.

1. **Author’s synthesis of the Dr. habil. dissertation**

The author’s synthesis of the Dr. habil. dissertation corresponds to the content of the Dr. habil. dissertation. It has been submitted both in Bulgarian and English. I must emphasize that the Dr. habil. thesis has been written in excellent English.

1. **Personal impressions**

I have known assoc. prof. Nelly Tincheva-Georgieva for almost 30 years. I should admit that she is a well-established specialist and highly appreciated colleague in the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages at the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. She is well known among the academic community for her extraordinary diligence and hard work, which becomes evident in her rich scientific production.

 **CONCLUSION**

The Dr. habil. thesis on the topic of **A multi-process cognitive model for investigating text and discourse** presented by assoc. prof. Nelly Tincheva-Georgieva, PhD,is of broad interest from a scientific and practical-applied point of view, considering that it provides important theoretical and practical-applied assumptions on the functioning of cognitive mechanisms in the analysis of text and discourse. The Dr. habil. thesis shows that assoc. prof. Nelly Tincheva-Georgieva possesses thorough knowledge and skills in the professional field 2.1 philology. Furthermore it exposes her qualities and skill to conduct her own research. The submitted materials meet the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. Based on the aforementioned, I am hereby giving my **positive assessment** of the conducted piece of research, presented in the discussed above Dr. habil. thesis and author’s synthesis of it and **I suggest that the honorable scientific jury should confer the Dr. habil. degree** to assoc. prof. Nelly Tincheva-Georgieva, PhD, in the higher education field 2. humanitarian sciences**,** professional field 2.1 philology.

20 May 2023 Assoc. prof. Rositsa Ishpekova, PhD

|  |
| --- |
|  |