

REVIEW

on a dissertation for obtaining a PhD degree

Author of dissertation: Henrique Carlos Dores, Ph. D. student at the Department of Languages, Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, professional field 2.1. Philology, Text pragmatics

Dissertation topic: Conceptual Metaphors and Pragmatic Context in Political Speeches (in Spanish and Portuguese)

Reviewer: Prof. Diana Yankova, D.Litt., Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, New Bulgarian University, Sofia

Brief information about the PhD student: Henrique Dores holds a degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Porto (2006), a Diploma in Social and Political Sciences from the Vytautos Magnus University and a Master's degree in Semiotics, Language and Advertisement (2018) from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski. In 2020, he started his PhD studies in Linguistics - Pragmatic Analysis of Political Discourse under the supervision of prof. Milena Popova.

Publications on the topic: The PhD student has submitted 5 articles on the topic of the dissertation, 4 of them published in collections or conference proceedings. The Reinvention of Rhetoric and its Fundamental Role in Political Discourse Analysis has been published in an electronic scholarly journal and examines the evolution of rhetoric, exploring the different ways in which it has been defined and applied in research. It also focuses on the links between rhetoric and other disciplines such as linguistics and pragmatics, and its role in contemporary political discourse analysis. Some of the other articles focus on cognitive and pragmatic aspects of meaning in the political speeches of Spanish Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez and Portuguese Prime Ministers Pedro Pascual Coelho and António Costa, among others, a study of conceptual metaphors, and a semiotic study based on Foucault, Metz and Bettelheim, which is the basis of his MA thesis.

The author's summary of the dissertation faithfully reflects the structure and content of the thesis and includes a detailed account of the contributions of his research.

Relevance of the dissertation topic: the dissertation of Henrique Carlos Dores is 326 pages, consisting of four chapters, a conclusion and a list of references. As a second part of the dissertation, 23 appendices are presented - 370 pages in total - which are the corpora of the study. The thesis is devoted to the analysis of the inaugural speeches of Portuguese Prime Ministers since the existence of a constitutional government in Portugal since 1974 and of Spanish Prime Ministers since the inception of constitutional government in Spain since 1978. The emphasis is on the study of conceptual metaphors in political discourse with a grounding in George Lakoff's theory of meaning. Various methodologies are examined, such as Steen's metaphor identification procedure and Jonathan Charteris-Black's corpus approach to critical metaphor analysis.

The topic of the dissertation represents a topical issue in conceptual metaphor research especially in its diachronic comparison between Spanish and Portuguese inaugural political speeches. The function of this type of discourse is to influence, to persuade, to create public perception and can be studied from the perspective of different sciences. Metaphors are at the heart of this type of communication, and a thorough investigation of the functions, roles and strategic potential of conceptual metaphors will lead to a better understanding of the formation and structure of political speeches. In this process, the role of pragmatics and context are of particular importance to the functioning of this type of text, and it is this that the PhD student takes into account in his research.

Hence, the choice of the topic is determined by the topicality of the issue at hand in theoretical and practical terms, as well as by the lack of a similar in-depth study of Portuguese and Spanish political discourse from the perspective of the theory of conceptual metaphors and pragmatics.

Familiarity with the scientific issues analyzed and literature review: the dissertation of Henrique Carlos Dores is not only a thorough study of the scientific issues at hand, but is written in a clear, interesting and convincing manner. The text is in English and demonstrates an excellent command of academic discourse. The literature review offered is comprehensive and undoubtedly demonstrates that he is well versed in the subject matter under study. The doctoral student reviews a large spectrum of scholarly literature and demonstrates a good knowledge. However, the dissertation's critical analysis is lacking in places, the author's stance towards one or another school of thought or theory not always clear, nor at times its relation to the matter under study.

Relevance of the research methodology to the aims and objectives: The aim of the thesis is to explore the role of conceptual metaphors in political speeches in the function of the latter to persuade, manipulate and shape public thinking against the background of the context in which communicative strategies are constructed. Some of the research questions sought to be answered are the choice and type of conceptual metaphors in the speeches studied, the differences and similarities between metaphors in Portuguese and Spanish texts, the diachronic changes in the period studied, the influence of context in making sense of the metaphors used. To achieve the objectives, Henrique Carlos Dores successfully applies a complex hybrid approach composed of qualitative and quantitative analyses. The cognitive and pragmatic research methods are qualitative, but they are complemented by the application of quantitative tools in the form of the computer concordancer AntConc 4.2.0. The corpus of the study is composed of 23 inaugural political speeches, of which 10 by Portuguese and 13 by Spanish prime ministers after the establishment of the constitutional state in both countries. Although rather succinctly described with the volume not explicitly mentioned, the corpora totals 370 pages.

It can be confidently stated that the aims and objectives were well formulated and fully attained as a result of the chosen research methodology.

Theoretical and applied contributions of the dissertation: The dissertation contains both theoretical and applied results, which represent an original contribution to the study of the use of conceptual metaphors in political speeches. As a result of the research, Henrique Carlos Dores reaches a plethora of significant conclusions and formulates several main contributions that can be highlighted in the following two subcategories:

1. Contributions to the theory of language: presentation of a first-of-its-kind comparative study of conceptual metaphors in Spanish and Portuguese political discourse; use of a complex, integrated research approach; development of an analytical model for the study of metaphors in political discourse based on George Lakoff's theory of meaning.
2. Contributions to the practice of teaching. The results contribute to the development of a methodology for optimizing the process of teaching specialized language for students of law, international relations, etc., as well as for the training of translators.

Also included are guidelines for future research that may be a continuation of the topics explored by Henrique Dores. The two corpora of opening political speeches created for the

purpose of this research can be very useful in future studies by specialists in various academic disciplines.

Recommendations and critical remarks: I would recommend that future research Henrique Does consider improving the structure which would contribute to an easier navigation of the text. For example, the corpus of the research is only mentioned late in the text - on p. 85, and then only very cursorily - the size is not described, nor is the period of the speeches made explicit, although the years are given in the appendices, but each speech should be looked at separately. In a similar vein, the research questions are found on p. 86.

In case the PhD student decides to continue his research in this area I would like to recommend including a comparative analysis of conceptual metaphors in political speeches in Bulgarian. It would be worthwhile to see to what extent there are language and cultural differences.

CONCLUSION: All the critical remarks and recommendations are intended to contribute to the shaping of a better text and analysis, and in no way diminish the undeniably enormous work accomplished by the PhD student. The dissertation is a serious, wide-ranging, theoretically and practically significant work that fully meets the requirements of Article 27 of the PPPASRB. I confidently give my **positive assessment of** Henrique Carlos Does's thesis and recommend that he be awarded the PhD degree.

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