

REVIEW

of the scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, the only participant in the competition for the academic position of *Professor* in professional field 2.1. Philology (General Linguistics - cognitive linguistics and word formation (English)), announced in State Gazette No. 48 of 28.06.2022.

The document submitted for the competition are in full working order and comply with all the requirements of the LAW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA. The candidate, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, has been affiliated since 2004 with Sofia University (Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology), where she has successively passed the stages of study (with a Master's degree), PhD and teaching as Assistant Professor, Senior Assistant Professor and Associate Professor. She has specialized at Vitautas Magnus University, University of Silesia in Katowice and L'Agence universitaire de la Francophonie for Online Learning. She is currently the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology. She has held the positions of Head of the Department of English and American Studies, Head of the Section of the same Department, Head of an international project at the Ministry of Education, Head of a project at the NIS, participated in a number of other programmes and projects (12 in total). She is a member of the editorial boards of 3 of our linguistics journals, she sits on the board of 3 foreign journals, has been a reviewer and member of the organizing committee of a number of international conferences. She is a member of the International Cognitive Linguistics Association and the Bulgarian Society for English Studies. She is the author of 5 reviews and 3 opinions for scientific degrees and titles, 2 reviews for academic positions and 6 reviews for scientific publications. She has taught 3 PhD, 7 MA and 10 BA courses. Her teaching activity covers the courses Introduction to General Linguistics, Analytic Grammar, Analytic Approaches to Texts, English for Academic Purposes, Linguistic Anthropology, Language in Action, English Language Semantics, Grammar, Practical Syntax, Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Culture, Language Data and Linguistic Patterns, Linguistic Theories and the Transatlantic Zone, Semantics and Term Formation, Language

and Society in the Americas, etc. She a number of other practical and seminar classes related to the acquisition of the English language and the improvement of students' speaking skills.

In the current competition Assoc. Bagasheva participates with an impressive volume and quality of scientific production, including 1 dictionary, 12 studies and articles, 4 textbooks and 1 monograph.

Even before the announcement of the competition, I was already quite well informed about the scientific production of Mrs. Bagasheva, related to her doctoral dissertation and her habilitation (for the academic position of *Associate Professor*), and getting acquainted now with her latest research has confirmed my conviction that in this case we are faced not only with some conscientious and diligent teacher, but a serious scholar, author of in-depth studies of various language corpora, widely informed about the state of linguistics internationally, a modern thinker, proposing bold original hypotheses and judiciously combining her own approaches with the innovative ideas of a number of scholars from different countries. This gives me the reason to construct my review not as a chronologically structured evaluative description of individual works, but a discussion based, as a point of reference, on the evolution of the author's ideas and the perspectives she has adopted of specific objects of investigation.

Although the publications of Al. Bagasheva before the announcement of the present competition will not be discussed here, I would like to note that in each of them she has already emerged as an original thinker with a solid interest in the cognitive characteristics of temporality in languages, in the peculiar structural and semantic organization of some Amerindian languages, and in all that is hidden in the expression *the magical in language*. These writings have given me the opportunity to become closely acquainted with the author's linguistic credo and to convince myself that the figure of an extremely promising scholar is emerging in Bulgarian theoretical linguistics and English studies. Mrs. Bagasheva with her further work has completely confirmed this conviction and even exceeded the expectations of the collegium.

The searching thought of the author could not go unnoticed by her colleagues and it is very indicative that it manifests itself in the works co-authored with our distinguished specialists in English and American studies of the rank of professors M. Pencheva, L. Grozdanova, etc. It is my deep conviction that co-authorship is also an indicator of the place a linguist occupies

in their field, because it is an expression of the trust placed in them by their teachers and mentors.

The output presented for discussion is not simply a quantitative addition to its predecessor publications. It clearly outlines the thematic areas towards which the candidate's scientific preferences are directed. Broadly speaking, it concentrates on the interconnectedness between language, culture and mind. In addition to the aforementioned broad thematic areas, note should be made here of the work on the methodology of teaching English grammar, on lexical semantics, on word formation and, above all, on one of its most complex manifestations - composition. Throughout, Al. Bagasheva's reflections are based on her conviction that language is a specific phenomenon that cannot be defined uniquely either as an organism, nor as a mechanism.

Naturally, the most important place in the reviewed production is occupied by the monograph *Prototypes, Metonymy and Word Formation*, devoted to the "complexity of complex words", and also to cognitive scripts, paradigmatic, analogy, metonymy, etc. These formal cognitive operations play an important role in the creation and interpretation of complex words. Iconicity and prototypicality are recognized in a number of studies and articles as the main mechanisms for the creation and interpretation of subordinative, modifying complex nouns. In this case we are talking about the Bulgarian language. The constant reminder that a phenomenon represented differently in different languages is being discussed makes a strong impression, which speaks of proximity to the basic theoretical postulates of the theory of linguistic relativism. Well acquainted with this theory, Al. Bagasheva devotes a separate article (*Compound Verbs in English and Bulgarian and the Relativity Debate*) to the so-called Whorfian effects related to nomination and its characteristic products in different languages. This article could be considered in parallel with the monograph, because its subject is again compound verbs in English and Bulgarian, but the angle of observation is different - they are considered from an onomasiological point of view and are actually related to the segmentation of reality in living languages. The author's attention is focused on the ergative-absolutive cryptotype, whose reflexes in English and Bulgarian differ significantly and can be delineated within a kind of dichotomy. Sickinger's notion of *a self-imposing spiraling causal loop* is used, which becomes a central tenet in the contrastive study of the inextricable relationship and mutual influence between language, mind and the linguistic unconscious. I would also

add a behavioural component here, as the sharpened attention of English speakers to a certain type of sensitivity and directed keenness of observation in the perception of events is considered. This, according to the author, leads to the construction of a cognitive routine, giving rise to special types of conceptualizations, in their final form encoded linguistically as complex lexemes. In contrast to the situation in English, in the Bulgarian language an opposition of the ergative-absolutive cryptotype takes shape, which I would call with the technical term *resistance of the material*, because I fully accept the proposal of Assoc. Bagasheva's explanation of this fact with our preference for affixation in the formation of verbal vocabulary. Another interesting dichotomy introduced by the candidate is the dominant lexicalization of *path* in Bulgarian and of *manner* in English. This dichotomy is defined as an element of hypothesis, but, in fact, we could admit it as a fully proven statement, since in Bulgarian there is almost a complete absence of compound verbs with two verb components (VV). Thus, the author's approaches in her individual studies turn out to complement each other and reveal the essential characteristics of the subject more fully. The monograph shows that reduplicative compound words are formed in Bulgarian, as well as in English, in accordance with mechanisms that are also responsible for the formation of compound verbs. In her earlier research the author sees as one of her future goals the elucidation of the reasons for these differences. And here, in the publications discussed here, she takes the decisive step of proposing a hypothesis according to which the differences mentioned already find a definite explanation. I mentioned the situation in Bulgarian above. And the explanatory descriptor of English compound verbs boils down to the fact that they are all, according to the author's claim, "seen as the product of the opportunistic strategy of maximizing the possibilities that people use to bring the traces of word-formation and language use that are in a 'super-state in their minds into words that we see, hear, describe, etc.'" The problem of the word-creative activity of the speaker is closely related to all conceptions of the creative function of language. Already W. von Humboldt spoke about the creativity of the speaking person on the logico-psychological level, F. de Saussure noted the closeness of the rules of speech-use to the rules of a certain game (chess), Ludwig Wittgenstein developed one of the most interesting theories of language play from the positions of late logical positivism. Assoc. Bagasheva does not use ready-made theoretical concepts of the creative function of language. She focuses her attention on creative word-formation, which in interlingual translation is at certain times fundamentally

limited by a number of factors that I would generically call extra-linguistic considerations. In her article *Transformation-creativity in word-formation. A case study of nonce-formation* the object of study is the translation of a Shakespearean tragedy by Pr. A. Shurbanov. The author distinguishes in a very subtle way between the language play of creative word-formation on the one hand and productivity (we are talking about productivity in rules, formants, processes, etc.) and creativity on the other. Thus, an original research position based on two dichotomies takes shape. The peculiar point here is that they intersect as they have a common component - creativity in word formation. It is suggested that the oppositions in these dichotomous structures are overcome thanks to the cognitive operation of analogy. I would venture to add from myself that analogy is altogether the most powerful process, affecting absolutely all linguistic levels, but it is traced most distinctly at the morphological level, especially when it is approbated by means of two filters - accentology and word formation.

If we turn our attention to the approbation of these views at the morphological level and in the plane of derivational processes, we will necessarily come to the question of linguistic patterns (those which in English terminology are called patterns as opposed to models). And in one of the candidate's studies, we find confirmation of this position. The very title of the study, *Compounds, lexicalization patterns and part-of-speech: English and Bulgarian compound verbs in comparison and contrast*, is revealing of this fact. Here, compound verbs are subjected to a typological analysis, in which their creation in English is assessed as a productive process in contrast to that in Bulgarian - the author assumes that verbs of this type in Bulgarian are inherited. According to her, in Bulgarian patterns of lexicalization, reflecting the linguistic encoding of lexical concepts, there is a tendency to prefer the participant in the situation as a component in the composition of the compound verb, while the circumstances and the instrument remain in the background or are simply pushed out. I venture a small remark - in this case I would speak not of lexical concepts, but of lexical content structures, since behind every lexeme are complex semantic conglomerates and the lexeme-concept relation can be equilibrium only in the case of terminological lexis, and not always. But in this case that is not the important thing. What is important is the observation of the pushing out of individual components from the composition of the compound verb, a spontaneous procedure which in pragmatics, in connection with other similar phenomena, has come to be playfully called *peeling off*. Al. Bagasheva

repeatedly speaks about a complex process, called by her conceptual configuration of internal relations in the composition of complex verbs. In her reflections I find some echo of the question of gradation of semes and their rearrangement, which is dealt with in procedural semantics. It's always interesting to see the reformulation of issues that interest you from a slightly different perspective. This gives rise to complementarity in linguistics and sets the stage for further verification of certain deductively accepted beliefs.

According to the candidate, syntactic rules in Bulgarian have a stronger influence on word-formation objects and processes. She connects this with the inflectional (grammatical) morphology playing the role of an intermediary. This view is particularly close to my heart because I have also reasoned in a similar way when working on the issue of derivational rules and the semantic and pragmatic restrictions that influence the final derivational product. I find the reasoning of Al. Bagasheva to be extremely correct and precise. Taking into account the fact that the verbal zone of the Bulgarian language is dominated by syntheticism and the English by analyticism, she links the typological study with the constructive approach to word-formation morphology and does so with a strictly defined goal - modelling of language-specific and local middle schemata, an undeniably solid basis for delineating analytic schematic formations. Her motivation is primarily driven by the conviction that the aforementioned approach can avoid the limitations inherent in classifications relying on lexical interpretation of components. The author argues that the compositional approach "also assumes the hypothesis of a meaning inherent in the construction as such, which leads to the recognition of a non-compositional meaning/interpretation related to the 'coercive power' of the construction vis-à-vis any meaning of the components". It was interesting for me to notice that there is a point in these so well formulated reflections of the author that different linguists in different countries are working on. For example, Igor Miloslavsky applies his own compositional approach when he writes about the context-dependent variation of Russian verbs. I define this point as interesting because it turns out that almost simultaneously, absolutely independently of each other, linguists from different schools and directions are thinking about identical phenomena. Here I take the liberty to add myself to the mentioned linguists, because when Mrs. Bagasheva was thinking about two types of compound words formed by composition - verb-centric substantive compound words and compound verbs in English and Bulgarian (see the article *Semantic packaging in word-based compounds in English and Bulgarian*), I was working on a similar

problem related to derivational rules and semantic laws. The author adheres to the hypothesis of the strong influence of word-formation paradigms and of the non-obligatoriness of the relationship between word-formation process and canonical products. I am particularly close to the view of Assoc. Bagasheva's view that it is possible for separate lexical classes to include members with different derivational histories; I am also close to her view of the role of word-formation paradigms in filling the gaps left by the lack of a direct causal relationship between word-formation processes and products with canonical derivations.

In the author's narrative, there is no doubt about the existence of a contrast between making sense of word-formation phenomena with the help of rules in direct dependence on a certain process, on the one hand, and analysis in the light of schemes and analogy, on the other. A bold operational decision has been made to conduct the analysis of verbocentric complex words using concept fields and the strict delineation of word-formation types. Both the mentioned word-formation types and onomasiological ones are subjected to analysis, and the perspective of observation is fixed within the framework of Natural Morphology. This choice of point of view appeals to me immensely, because I am inclined to think that Natural Morphology, which begins to form in early childhood, lies at the basis of that unwritten Social Contract which maintains the higher degree of iconicity of the Bulgarian word-formation system in terms of the dualism of the linguistic sign, and this, as the author rightly notes, manifests itself "in a more explicit and more rigorously maintained 'fit' between form and meaning".

As is well known, the nature of the object under investigation can to some extent postulate the method of investigation. The dualism of the linguistic sign referred to in the article *Semantic packaging...* stands out, again, in the article *Frame semantics, metaphonymy and compound verbs in English*, where compound verbs are analyzed from a dual perspective - semantic and conceptual. Lampert's treatment of them as composites is highlighted, which allows the author to explicate the complex dependencies between lexical units and conceptual frames in the processes of profiling and exemplification. She thus finds herself (not for the first time!) in the zone of procedural semantics, as evidenced by the three models of the process of modifying conceptual frames - by explicating a constituent of the frame, modelling the frame in a spatial schema, and constructing a conceptually mixed frame. The intervention of

metaphonymic processes reflected in the three models is varied and diverse - in two of them the role of conceptual metonymy is clearly evident, while in the third one conceptual blending within a metaphorical projection is observed. Adopting Radden and Dirven's definition of a conceptual core (see *Cognitive English Grammar*), Al. Bagasheva uses Langacker's view (see *Concept, Image, Symbol*) of profiling types and concludes that the latter "overcome the opposition and blur the boundary between relational concepts and conceptual nuclei".

The issue of blurring the boundaries between both facts of language and conceptual constructs representing facts of theory is one that is often developed in contemporary linguistics. In the article *Semantic packaging...* it is argued that the violation of the iconicity of a form relative to a meaning in English is explained by the flexibility of the distinctions of classes of parts of speech due to the lack of explicit morphological marking. Here is added the widely represented conversion, i.e., all that gives us a reason to speak of the so-called fuzzy grammar, often called in the Slavic-language literature *fuzzy grammar* or *grammar of classes with fuzzy boundaries*. In the lack of explicit morphological marking, Mrs. Bagasheva sees one of the important reasons for the existence of a productive scheme for complex verbs in English, which is practically not observed in Bulgarian.

The works of Assoc. prof. Bagasheva can be divided into several main groups: most of them are devoted to the English language, and periodically in some of them a certain contrastive line appears, covering Bulgarian language material; in others the English and Bulgarian material are in a balanced position; in others the material is only or mainly Bulgarian. Either way, she has, using the method of cultural linguistics, found a place and a way to show in comparative terms English and Bulgarian reflections, defined as metonymic, "in the context of embodiment through body parts" in order to delineate the specificities of cultural conceptualizations in the two languages. Describing a series of metonymic and conceptual metaphorical projections, the candidate concludes that the English linguistic material provides a basis for thinking about conceptualising communication on the basis of embodiment through body parts, whereas the Bulgarian linguistic and more specifically phraseological material indicates a freer perception of communication. Her method of working is original, by means of which she shows that verbocentric complex nouns naming human beings in the Bulgarian language in their cycles of derivation are

associated with paradoxes that are revealed in the analysis of the steps in their derivation. What is most striking in this case is the author's conclusion that the paradoxes she has observed are caused by the division of verbocentric complex nouns into synthetic and parasynthetic ones depending on the presence or absence of the suffixal component as a separate lexical unit. In this conclusion I see an aspiration to delineate some specific morphological-derivational primitives amenable to lexical-semantic interpretation. This is, as far as I know, a question first posed, but in a much more obscure and, I would say, old-fashioned way, by E. Sapir in his study of the morphology of amorphous languages. Al. Bagasheva's reasoning in this area leads to a challenge to the understanding of the architecture of grammar as a set of competing modules, because she sees in it a reflection of the long accepted almost mechanical separation of semantics, morphology and syntax.

What in the scientific work of Al. Bagasheva can be defined as thoughts on linguistic theory and the construction of an adequate grammar, brings us back to the object itself - language - and introduces us to her understanding of language itself as a complex, adaptive, emergent, heterarchical, model-sensitive, perceptual-symbolic system whose use and understanding depend on so-called immersed experiences and are based on culturally specific, embodied simulations. Whereas until recently we spoke only of language's relationship to the brain, many scholars, including the candidate, now speak of its highly complex relationship to the human body. This relationship gives rise to a multitude of complex primary schemata, providing the possibility that abstract meanings can be created by means of a series of metonymic connections, and that imagery can be defined as a choice of presentational frames in which no secondary conceptualization is performed, but immediate visualization is observed. Here, I myself cannot answer the question of whether both mechanisms are at work in the generation of imagery, since imagery is not itself a homogeneous phenomenon. My question is: can different kinds of imagery be the result of the action of only one mechanism? I ask this question because, as is well known, thinking is an unobservable process, only its results are observable. And the question of their generating mechanisms always comes down to the creation of hypotheses. That is why I would still call the thesis defended by the author (as she herself labels it) a hypothesis. The thing is, cognitive theories are decidedly deductive, as all high theories of modern science are by definition. This is their strength and importance, and this is what determines their role as locomotives in the scientific understanding of reality. But again, by definition

they anticipate the development of the experimental field in which their final approbation takes place. That is why in this particular case I would speak of a hypothesis. It seems to me that Mrs. Bagasheva's reasoning about imagery is directly related to her attention to the subjective moment in language. In the article *The semantics and morphology of identity enhancement in the lexicons of Bulgarian and English* the role of personal emotional attitudes is emphasized, which does not contradict in the least the semantic and formal iconic marking of the linguistic devices used. When I ask the candidate a question, I do not back down from my assertion that she is surprisingly logical and consistent in the course of her reasoning. I have encountered in the literature many contradictory and often unconvincing interpretations of the issue of expressive language units. In the production under review, I see a clear and convincing presentation of the author's position, coming to the conviction of isomorphism of form and content in the expression of a certain kind of meaning. This is not the antithesis of the Hjelmslevian opposition of the plan of content and the plan of expression. I take it as evidence of my personal conviction that any claim about the architectonics of linguistic structures comes up with a big *BUT*, ...

Since the main work to be discussed in this competition is, after all, the monograph of Assoc. prof. Bagasheva, I would like to emphasize especially the logic of its construction, the extremely informative theoretical part with a clearly outlined conceptual framework (*Theoretical Framework*), in which the author's understanding of cognitivism and constructivism in word formation are consistently, albeit briefly, presented. This creates comfortable conditions for the further unfolding of the text, in which Mrs. Bagasheva's highly theoretical reflections (see, e.g., chap. *Prototypes and iconicity*) are "refreshed" in places with literary examples and expressive quotations that definitively convince the reader, the inquisitive reader to whom she addresses herself, that creativity accompanies every speech act because language belongs equally to all people.

Much more can be said about the research and teaching activities of Assoc. prof. Dr. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, but what has been said so far gives me grounds to state with absolute conviction that she fully deserves to be awarded the academic position of **Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (General Linguistics - Cognitive Linguistics and Word Formation (English))**.

23.10.2022

(Prof., Dr. habil. Stefana Petrova Dimitrova)