

Review

for the dissertation work of Assoc. Katya Issa, Ph.D. on the topic "Bulgarian language south of the Equator. (A sociolinguistic study of the language of the Bulgarian emigrant community in the city of Sydney, Australia) "

for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the field of higher education 2. *Humanities*, professional direction 2.1. *Philology*

by Prof. Ph.D. Krasimira Aleksova, Department of Bulgarian Language, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. Data about the competition and the candidate

I have been selected as a member of the jury for the competition by order RD-38-304/22.06.2023 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". One candidate participated in the competition – Associate Professor Katia Grozeva Issa from the University of Architecture, Construction and Geodesy, Sofia. The candidate presented a habilitation thesis on the topic "Bulgarian language south of the Equator. (A sociolinguistic study of the language of the Bulgarian emigrant community in Sydney, Australia)" and 30 articles according to the attached list. The minimum national requirements for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" have been met, as well as the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Application at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". I am not aware of any violations of the procedure.

Assoc. Dr. Katya Grozeva Issa is a teacher of Bulgarian as a foreign language at the University of Architecture, Construction and Geodesy. She taught Bulgarian to foreigners at the Druzhba Language School, at EU BI TECH GLOBAL LIMITED, a branch of CBT, and is currently a part-time teacher of Bulgarian as a foreign language at the Medical University, Sofia. In addition, she was a part-time teacher of Bulgarian morphology and syntax at the "St. Cl. Ohridski", translator from and into Arabic at the Sofia City Court and the State Agency for Refugees. Since January 2013, she has been an associate professor of modern Bulgarian language at the UASG, and before that she was a lecturer and senior lecturer at the same university. He is the language editor of the UASG Yearbook. Leads since 2020, in addition to classes in Bulgarian as a foreign language and a lecture course on language culture at UASG. She obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in 2004 with a work on "Associative Bulgarian-Arabic language patterns". She graduated from the majors "Bulgarian Philology" and "Arabic Philology", in addition to a second higher education "Philosophy". She was also a student at the State Library Institute. He speaks Arabic, Russian, Serbian and English. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Sociolinguistic Society "Acad. Mihail Videnov", she was the scientific secretary of the "Philological Sciences" section of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

2. Contributions to the candidate's works

The dissertation work of Assoc. Katya Issa Ph.D. on the topic "Bulgarian language south of the Equator (Sociolinguistic study of the language of the Bulgarian emigrant community in the

city of Sydney, Australia)" is the first monographic study dedicated to the Bulgarian language of those living in the city. Sydney, Australia. The topic of the work is fully dissertationable, and the analyses, summaries and conclusions have the sufficient breadth and depth, suitable for a dissertation for a "Doctor of Science" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, *professional direction* 2.1. *Philology*.

The dissertation is spread over 610 pages and contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and 21 appendices. The author presented the purpose of her research in a sufficiently motivated manner – presentation and application of a methodology for tracking the damage to the Bulgarian language of our emigrants in the city of Sydney, Australia, by describing the multifaceted linguistic situation of the Bulgarian language in this city. The tasks of the dissertation work are set out in great detail, which first include a review of the sources for the language of the Bulgarian emigration, then an introduction to the work of the Association of Bulgarian Schools Abroad until 2016, as it affects the Bulgarian language of the young generations, students outside Bulgaria, in third place – research of the language of the family as a sociolinguistic object, fourth – choice of place and time for field sociolinguistic studies, in fifth place, but not in importance – choice of appropriate methodology for researching the Bulgarian language of compatriots us living in Sydney. It is fully justified to conduct an included observation, which guarantees the study of the spontaneous, unedited Bulgarian speech of the Bulgarians living in Australia.

In a separate part of the Introduction, the object and the subject of K. Issa's research are presented – the subject is all Bulgarians in Sydney, and the specific subject – the Bulgarian speech of the people living in the city of Sydney, Australia. The author dwells on the unity and diversity of the scientific object – the Bulgarian community of 200 people in the city of Sydney, of which K. Issa studied linguistically 80 people, which is not a small sample.

The main tasks of the dissertation work are presented in a separate part of the Introduction, they are thought out in detail in advance and are suitable for researching the specific subject.

If the research methods are to be outlined, I will first point out the included observation, which made it possible to form a corpus of over 200 hours of recordings of spontaneous Bulgarian speech in different spheres and situations of Bulgarians from Sydney of different ages, with different professions, majors, length of residence in Sydney and different educational attainment. The author also used the survey method to collect empirical data to study the attitudes of Bulgarians from Sydney. The data from this survey are important because they provide information on the duration of residence in the city of Sydney, on the marital status of the respondents, on the language spoken at home, on contacts with other Bulgarians, on returns to Bulgaria and contacts with Bulgarians. which inevitably affects the use of the Bulgarian language, the access to the Bulgarian press, radio and television, the reading of Bulgarian books, the children's visits to the Bulgarian Sunday school, which is of essential importance for the level of Bulgarian language proficiency of the younger generations Bulgarians in Sydney. All these data are extremely necessary in order to outline the peculiarities of the linguistic situation of the Bulgarian language in the city of Sydney, Australia.

The author has very rich empirical material on the spontaneous unedited Bulgarian speech in Sydney. It gives K. Issa the opportunity to examine in a sociolinguistic aspect the existing modern speech norm of behavior of Bulgarian speakers in Sydney, to follow the switching of the

language code, to outline the so-called deformations of the Bulgarian speech and the algorithm of their expression.

Katya Issa's work is distinguished by the system of her own terms introduced by her, first among which I will point out the so-called rebirth, which finds expression in the processes in the Bulgarian language of the emigrants in the city of Sydney.

In the introductory part, Katya Issa presents her preliminary hypotheses about the deformation of the Bulgarian language of the Bulgarians living in Sydney, stating that her expectations were for the greatest vulnerability at the lexical level, mainly in the area of nouns, insertion of foreign words, etc. . Preliminary expectations also include deformations at the phonetic level, as well as smaller-scale grammatical changes, since the morphological and syntactic levels are more resistant to foreign language influences. The researcher envisages a vacillation of articulation, a reduction in the variety of temporal forms, a loss of the sense for the use of re-narrative forms, as well as the presence of some deformations at the syntactic level. All these preliminary expectations are subordinated to the views on bilingualism and its type among the different speakers of the Bulgarian language in the city of Sydney.

The algorithm of the upcoming changes in the Bulgarian language of the emigrants in Sydney, Australia, is subordinated to the consideration of the peculiarities of the speech of different generations - from the first generation of emigrants to the third, born in Australia and vaguely familiar with Bulgaria and the linguistic situation in it. A positive feature of the dissertation work is the consideration of some important factors from a psycholinguistic point of view, which are significant for the Bulgarian language of those living in the city of Sydney.

In a separate part, K. Issa examines the policy of Bulgaria in relation to today's emigrants, as well as the policy of emigrants towards today's Bulgaria. In this first chapter, at the beginning, the author theoretically dwells on linguistic globalization, the situation in Australia and the influence on the Bulgarian speech of the Bulgarians living in Sydney. The author wants to make clear differences between the terms *globalization*, *Europeanization* and *emigration*, without omitting their linguistic aspects. K. Issa fully justified his emphasis on the so-called glocalization, known in our country from the works of Angel Angelov. The importance of the bilingualism of the Bulgarians from the city of Sydney, belonging to different generations, has not gone unnoticed. The examined concepts have the task of outlining the contemporary threats of a supranational nature that affect the Bulgarian speech of the emigrants in Sydney. In this subsection of the introduction, the author dwells on the attitude of Bulgarian emigrants from Sydney towards Bulgaria.

The foreign policy of Bulgarian studies is analyzed in the context of the language policy of Bulgaria. The author is interested in language policy, mostly related to the teaching of the Bulgarian language as a second language in foreign universities and as a second (native) language in Sunday schools outside Bulgaria. K. Issa's observations about the low quality of Bulgarian textbooks for Sunday schools are important . In a separate part, culturally oriented education in Bulgarian schools at home and abroad is commented. Another part is dedicated to the cultural orientation of the five Bulgarian schools in Australia. I think the critical comments on the Bulgarian textbooks used in the school in Sydney are of essential importance.

K. Issa prefers the term *second born* for the Bulgarian language of the children in the Bulgarian Sunday school in Sydney. In his work, Issa distinguishes the concepts of *first language*

– *second language – foreign language* in order to optimize the study of his main subject. The author is interested in the role of linguistics not so much in the study of this language as in the creation of textbooks for Bulgarian students abroad.

Katya Issa commented on the survey, which she carried out using the method of the respondents – on the language attitudes of Bulgarian emigrants. The researcher is interested in the emigrants' attitude towards their native language, their willingness to learn Bulgarian, as well as their children, their attitudes towards everything Bulgarian. The questions in the survey are well chosen to examine communication in Bulgarian, length of residence outside Bulgaria, contacts with Bulgarians, exposure to Bulgarian media, radio, television, books in Bulgarian, attendance at a Bulgarian school, etc. This survey, with some edits, was also sent to other Bulgarian emigrants outside Australia. The data speak of positive trends for the preservation of the Bulgarian language in the family and its transmission to the next generations. Among the respondents, there are those who believe that their children speak Bulgarian thanks to the Bulgarian Sunday schools, which proves the importance of these institutions. I do not know of any other such survey of the attitudes and evaluations of Bulgarian emigrants. The author emphasizes the need for learning the Bulgarian language in order to slow down the process of rebirth of Bulgarians abroad and the forgetting of the Bulgarian language by the generations born abroad.

At the end of the First Chapter, K. Issa examines the functions of the Bulgarian language of the emigrants in Sydney, e.g. symbolic role, which in Sydney is not manifested, linguistic loyalty, communicative function, referential function, emotive/expressive, connotative, phatic function, etc.

The second chapter is important in my opinion because it is dedicated to the Bulgarian language in Sydney. Bulgarian emigration to Australia is traced over time. Considerable attention is paid to the contemporary Bulgarian language situation in the city of Sydney, by which the author means, in my opinion, a study of the situation of the Bulgarian language in this city. K. Issa follows the methodology of the field study, applied in the study of V. Tarnovo by M. Videnov and B. Baichev from 1988. I think that a very good study of the modern varieties of the Bulgarian language in the domestic sphere was carried out with an emphasis on the deformations in it, caused by the interference with the English language. I would like to specify that not only the study of the speech in the everyday sphere was done, but also the speech with increased formality, since the speech in the Bulgarian Sunday schools is also studied. Emphasis is placed on the description of the situation of the Bulgarian language in Sydney and on diglossia, since our language has less prestige in Australia.

In order to present the situation of the Bulgarian language in Australia, K. Issa dwells on the Bulgarian-Australian cultural ties, on the linguistic contacts of the political emigrants in Sydney, on the language of the Bulgarian families in Sydney. K. Issa explains his attention to the language of the family by the fact that it is in a family environment that one can see whether the Bulgarian language is alive and passed down from generation to generation.

The main subject of study is the intermediate mixed language of the Bulgarians in Sydney, especially the children. The author presents her transcription system, which most clearly illustrates its features. The transcription system makes it possible to easily read the recordings, but also to get a clear impression of the peculiarities of the Bulgarian language. The analyzes are sufficiently

developed, the examples are abundant. They show both the interference and local peculiarities in the idiolects of the observed Bulgarians, differing from the codified norms.

One of the important parts of Chapter Two involves commenting on opposing trends in language code-switching in the observed Sydney families. Such observations are made for the first time in our sociolinguistics. The author presents the switching of the language code in the speech of the second generation of Bulgarian emigrants - born and raised in Sydney. They are bilingual in a situation of diglossia, for whom Bulgarian is born, but second. K. Issa also presents cases where bilingualism is actually absent because Bulgarians born in Australia do not speak Bulgarian. There are numerous cases of deformation of Bulgarian, with numerous interferences and foreign language influences in this mixed language. The so-called mixed families, in which only one member is Bulgarian, or families in which there are no Bulgarians, did not escape K. Issa's investigative gaze.

The second chapter also comments on the Bulgarian Sunday school in Sydney, which has existed for 12 years. Unfortunately, the students have a low command of the Bulgarian language. The problem is aggravated by the inadequate adaptation of the curricula and the content of the textbooks. The interviews substantiate these observations.

One part of the second chapter is dedicated to the difference in the communication models of three generations of Bulgarians in Sydney, while also commenting on the information technologies that affected these models. K. Issa emphasizes the importance of age in shaping the difference in the Bulgarian language of three generations of Bulgarians in Sydney. The author emphasizes that age is the leading factor that subordinates other socio-demographic characteristics to itself. The term *communication patterns* as patterns of communication in different generations is well formulated. The paper emphasizes that children in Sydney are more devoted to new technologies compared to children from Bulgaria. This undoubtedly affects the way they communicate.

The most significant from the point of view of the subject of the dissertation work is Chapter Three, which contains the field study of the language of the Bulgarian community in Sydney. The Bulgarian speech of 80 people was studied, of which 36 were defined as basic. The recordings were made with a hidden microphone, and their duration is about 100 hours. The Bulgarian speech of 24 students was studied, and the recordings lasted 30 hours. The total number of recordings is about 200 hours, which is an extremely rich archive. The author has presented the socio-demographic characteristics of the informants in detail, emphasizing the generational differentiation. It turns out that gender has no significant significance for the Bulgarian speech of the informants.

First, K. Issa describes the so-called alphabet group - 33 children, of whom 15 are boys and 18 are girls, 24 of whom are from the Bulgarian Sunday School in Sydney. Then it stops at the group of bilinguals of the middle generation (40 people), and finally at the group of adults - 7 people, of which 6 are women. All of them are monolinguals, speaking only Bulgarian. Following the methodology of M. Videnov and B. Baichev in the study of V. Tarnovo, K. Issa presents a sociolinguistic analysis of probes from the speech of these three groups of informants. Each probe is followed by a presentation and analysis of deviations from the codified Bulgarian language, first commenting on phonetic deviations, then morphological, lexical and syntactic ones.

Following the probes and their analyses, K. Issa pays particular attention to markers related to place of residence, the length of time the informants have resided in Australia, the age of the informants. The recordings were made not only in a school environment, but also during family gatherings in the homes of various Bulgarians from Sydney, as well as in public places. Of particular interest to me are the markers in the Bulgarian speech, which depend on the family, as well as the so-called by the author generational clashes.

The conclusion actually brings out the most important conclusions reached by K. Issa in the analyzes of the Bulgarian speech of our emigrants in Sydney. One of them is related to the fact that in Sydney there is an intermediate system of our language, which is "partially national in relation to Bulgarian and specific in relation to the new environment". Special attention is paid to interference in the language of the Bulgarians from Sydney. K. Issa introduces his terminology which is well grounded, e.g. *diversion*, *debulkarization*, *spawning*. The conclusion also comments on the lexical interferences that marked the Bulgarian language of the studied group. A separate subsection presents phonetic interferences, and others are devoted to grammatical (morphological and syntactic) interferences. Some stylistic interferences are also considered. The author again argues for the choice of the term *transitional language* to name the speech of the Bulgarians from Sydney. The conclusion again comments on the language forgetting algorithm that the researcher observed. The family, the Bulgarian Sunday school and state language policies are particularly important for slowing down the process of forgetting our language in a foreign language environment.

The abstract adequately presents the structure, content and contributions of the dissertation work. Also, the contributions correspond to the actual achievements of the dissertation of Assoc. Dr. Katya Issa.

Publications N 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 address questions related to dissertation topics. This shows that the scientific community in our country is aware of the developments and contributions of the dissertation work. Publication No. 7 presents important features of the methodology of the sociolinguistic research, which is applied in the monograph "The Velikotarnovo language" by M. Videnov and B. Baichev.

My recommendation to K. Issa is to publish works in English as well, in order to get an idea of the contributions of a wider range of researchers.

3. Conclusion

Based on the contributions in the works of the competition for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" of Assoc. Dr. Katya Grozeva Issa, I firmly believe that she can be given the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences", and I will vote positively for it answer.

21/08/2023
Sofia

Signature:
Prof. Ph.D. Krasimira Aleksova