

## REVIEW

of the dissertation of Dimitriya Marinkova

"Typological characteristics of the language situation in the city of Plovdiv"

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

The dissertation reviewed consists of an introduction, three chapters (*Language Situation, Typological Characteristics of the Language Situation in the City of Plovdiv and Empirical Study of Basic Sociolinguistic Variables within the Framework of A-Formation in the Contemporary Plovdiv Language Situation*), conclusion, references, publications on the topic of the dissertation and scientific contributions. Four publications on the topic of the dissertation (one in print) have also been presented.

According to the structural requirements for the organization of the dissertation, the introduction clarifies the topic and subject, the goals and objectives, as well as the methods of collecting and processing the empirical material (pp. 5–9). The topic and subject of the research, the main goal and the six objectives, as well as the applied theoretical and empirical methods and approaches are clearly and precisely formulated. At the end of the introduction, for clarity, the structure of the dissertation is included. In my opinion, the theoretical part presenting the basic concepts and basic research devoted to the linguistic situation (pp. 11–104) is too long in relation to the volume of the main chapters (pp. 105–251).

The choice of the topic and subject of this study is successful and relevant, since so far no study of the linguistic situation in the city of Plovdiv has been done on the basis of sociolinguistically significant quantitative, qualitative and evaluative characteristics, which is undoubtedly a contribution to Bulgarian sociolinguistics. The analyses and conclusions are based on empirical data of the ethnic, linguistic and ethnolinguistic diversity in the city and thus present the relative demographic power of the languages that make up its modern appearance, their communicative role, their linguistic features and their legal status. A significant contribution is also the non-representative study of the perceptions of contemporary residents in the city of Plovdiv of the prestigiousness of the languages of the ethnicities historically established in the city. An empirical study of the main non-codified variants of sociolinguistic variables, representative of the Plovdiv city language situation, according to observations and records of informants, has also been carried out. All this shows that qualitative and quantitative methods have been successfully applied, objective data and subjective evaluative attitudes have been combined.

In the **first chapter**, before defining the basic concept of *language situation* and presenting the typological classifications of language situations, the concepts of *national language*, *official language* and *literary language* are discussed in detail; *literary norm* and *codification*; *forms of existence of language*, *dialects*, *mesolect*; *diglossia* and *bilingualism*, with the aim of "a deeper understanding of the dynamics of language processes in the urban linguistic situation" (p. 14). The Bulgarian contributions to the study of urban linguistic situations in theoretical and empirical terms, focused on the analysis of sociolinguistic markers, the influence of social groups, regional and dialectal variability, linguistic accents, etc., are conscientiously reviewed. *The linguistic situation* is examined in a diachronic and synchronous aspect, showing excellent awareness and ability to compare and interpret different points of view towards the set goal of the study. However, some unintentional errors of a different nature have been made: in Table 1, in the qualitative features (item 2), the explanations in parentheses have not been differentiated, but repeated ("unrelated and typologically dissimilar"), which has also been carried over to pages 81 and 254 (Table 26).

The **second chapter** analyzes the contemporary linguistic situation in the city of Plovdiv by applying the quantitative, qualitative and evaluative classification and typological features formulated by V.V. Vinogradov and N.B. Mechkovska. First, brief historical information is presented in relation to the demographic characteristics of the city, tracing the changes in the demographic composition and in the representation of ethnic groups over the years. Valuable information from Stoyu Shishkov, Zoya Mikova and Stefan Shivachev has been quoted. Pages 109–110 give contradictory data on the population in 1946 – first 117,563 people, and then – 126,563 people. The writing here seems a bit chaotic and insufficiently well structured. This is followed by a presentation of the ethnic diversity of the city of Plovdiv as a consequence of the rich historical past of the city. This section is very informative – many facts and statements of various researchers are given, according to whom Plovdiv is a model of ethnic and cultural understanding, harmonious coexistence and tolerance.

The most influential is the next section of Chapter Two, which analyzes the contemporary linguistic situation in the city of Plovdiv through a complex of quantitative, qualitative and evaluative typological features and on the basis of specific empirical data. According to the feature of *the degree of linguistic and ethnolinguistic diversity*, which takes into account the number of ethnic languages and the number of ethnic formations, the Plovdiv urban linguistic situation is characterized as *multicomponent and multilingual*. The dynamics of languages over the years and the dominance of the Bulgarian language after 1884 have been traced. The repetition of Table 3 on pp. 152–153 is not necessary. According to

the criterion of *relative demographic power of languages*, which takes into account the percentage ratio between ethnic groups and mother tongue groups, the studied linguistic situation is, as expected, in *demographic disequilibrium* with a definite dominance of Bulgarian self-determination for the studied contemporary 20-year period (this is also the case for the periods 1887-1920 and 1926-1992). The quantitative indicators of *the relative communicative power of the language formations* and *the number of functionally dominant languages* in relation to the linguistic situation in Plovdiv were established through an analysis of the results of a survey conducted and point to the characteristics of *communicatively unbalanced* and *unipolar*.

This is followed by the definition of the Plovdiv language situation according to qualitative typological features (*linguistic character of the languages, degree of genetic proximity between the languages and legal status of the languages*) – including both unrelated and distantly related languages; heterogeneous and heteromorphic; characterized by "unrelated multilingualism" and disharmonious legal status of the languages. The results of the survey of the attitudes of Plovdiv residents towards the prestige of the languages present in the urban language environment are significant. The graph clearly illustrates the answers given to the question about the prestige of the 6 languages traditionally spoken in Plovdiv (and not the "5", as it was noted due to negligence), on a 5-point scale. An important and logical conclusion is made that "the Bulgarian language dominates within the framework of the modern Plovdiv language situation, not only because of the large number of speakers of the Bulgarian language as a first language, but also because of its social significance" (p. 195). The need for the next chapter, dedicated to the main sociolinguistic variables within the literary formation in the contemporary Plovdiv language situation – related to one of the main topics in the Bulgarian sociolinguistic problems – is well supported.

Chapter Three begins with an elucidation of the concepts of *sociolinguistic variable* and *sociolinguistic marker*, which are the theoretical basis of the empirical study of the most characteristic non-codified variants of sociolinguistic variables within the framework of **the** a-formation in the contemporary linguistic situation of the city of Plovdiv with an overview of the Bulgarian language. Some main Eastern Bulgarian non-codified variants of sociolinguistic variables in the works of Bulgarian scientists, which served as a basis for the selection of speech variants in the empirical study of the Plovdiv urban vocabulary, have been summarized in tables. The main sociolinguistic variables characteristic of the realizations of a-formation in the Plovdiv language situation are derived from some previous studies devoted

specifically to uncoded variants of sociolinguistic variables in the speech of Plovdiv residents (mainly from the publication of Ginka Karabelova).

The third part of this chapter contains the dissertation's actual contribution – an empirical study of the main sociolinguistic variables characteristic of the realizations of the A-formation in the city of Plovdiv in relation to the Bulgarian language. It is indicated how the selection of the empirically studied main sociolinguistic variables in the framework of the A-formation of the linguistic situation in the city of Plovdiv was carried out: "on the basis of theoretical and empirical studies in Bulgarian sociolinguistics, in which variants of sociolinguistic variables are investigated; of previous surveys of the spoken word of Plovdiv residents, as well as of the analysis of the records of the speech of informants from the city of Plovdiv." (p. 217). It is stated that specific data have been extracted for the realization of the variants of 6 phonetic, 2 accentological and 4 morphological (including phonomorphological) sociolinguistic variables, while the phonetic ones are in fact 5 (maybe one phonetic marker has been deleted?), and then 10 variables are analyzed instead of the stated 12. The number of informants for this empirical study is sufficient, their socio-demographic characteristics are noted (Table 17), and the method of the so-called random deliberate selection has been applied. The recordings of the speech of the informants in the conducted interviews have been made in two types of situations, in two *contextual styles*, *differing* in the degree of focused attention to proper speech and striving for adherence to a certain type of speech behavior. The dissertation analyzes in detail 10 sociolinguistic variables by age groups and then summarizes the 7 uncoded variants of the sociolinguistic variables in oral communication, even in the presence of the effect of the microphone, suggesting an increase in control over one's own speech. The conclusion that "the most stable non-coded variants, which are least subject to suppression, and which appear with increased attention to proper speaking in the two contextual styles, are: stressed singular feminine nouns with the definite article -ТЪ, ending in a consonant sound and the aorist forms with the thematic vowel -А-/-Ъ- instead of -О-" is important (p. 248). With regard to the second marker on page 243, an incorrect example is given – обърнѣх (here the aorist vowel is -a, not -o).

In her conclusion, the PhD candidate shows ability for summarizing the most significant results and outcomes (the objectives of the study should not be repeated here). The typological features of the Plovdiv urban language situation are systematized in tabular form according to the classification features applied in the study – quantitative, qualitative and evaluative. The main generalization based on the study of uncoded variants in the speech behavior of Plovdiv residents states that there are "persistent non-coded variants that are

difficult to suppress even with increased attention to speech" (p. 258) – two phonomorphological variables are indicated as the most prominent markers. It is also important that "the studied uncoded variants are distinguished by a different degree of representation and a varying susceptibility to suppression with a certain increase in control over proper speech within the framework of the selected two contextual styles" (p. 259).

I accept the seven contributions that the author of the study points out at the end of the dissertation.

The bibliography includes a total of 141 sources, of which 19 are magazines and collections, 69 book citations, monographs, textbooks and 53 electronic sources. Probably by mistake, there is no bibliographic description of the collective monograph under No. 67. In addition, some of the bibliographic sources indicated at the end of the dissertation are not cited in the text (for example, Nos. 46, 56, 62 of the cited books, monographs, textbooks; Nos. 1, 23, 37, 44 of the electronic sources).

Stylistically, some improvements could be made: there are repetitions, missing prepositions, lack of coherence ("one of the first..., are..." – p. 108), typographical errors, some of which change the meaning of the word ("Одринско" instead of Одриско – p. 109, "посечен" instead of посочен – p. 157).

The summary of the dissertation relatively fully and correctly reflects its main points and gives an idea of the essence of the research and its contributions. There are some errors and repetitions in it as well (on page 20 a whole statement is repeated).

In conclusion, I would like to say that, despite the omissions, the advantages of the presented research are proof of the ability of the PhD candidate to orient herself in the numerous theoretical statements and to build the theoretical framework necessary for empirical research, for her ability to organize a significant amount of material, to scientifically interpret it and to summarize the results of data analysis. Research requires great diligence, conscientiousness and precision, which is lacking in some places. The technical errors and omissions create an unpleasant impression. The style of the presentation is academic, yet clear and readable, in some places, however, burdened with repetitions.

The merits and contributions of the present dissertation give me reason to believe that it deserves to receive a positive assessment, and its author Dimitriya Marinkova to be awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor".