

REVIEW

submitted by Zhivka Stefanova Koleva-Zlateva, DSc,
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on a PhD thesis,
submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree PhD
in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology,
doctoral program “General and Comparative Linguistics – Indo-European linguistics”

Author: Demina Yuliyanova Ivancheva

Title: *Origin and development of words expressing the emotion of anger in Ibero-Romance languages*

Thesis Advisor: Assoc Prof. Bilyana Mihaylova, PhD

By order No. RD38-38/19.01.2024 of the Rector of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, I have been appointed as a member of the Academic Board to conduct the procedure for the defence of the PhD thesis, entitled *Origin and development of words expressing the emotion of anger in Ibero-Romance languages* for the award of the educational and scientific degree PhD in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, doctoral program “Germanic Languages: English Language”

1. General description of the presented materials

The set of materials presented by Demina Yulianova Ivancheva includes a dissertation, autobiography, abstract, list, and copies of printed scientific works.

The doctoral student has a total of three published articles on the dissertation topic: two in the *Contemporary Linguistics Journal* and one in a conference proceedings volume (“Word, Human, and Society: Studies in Honor of Assoc. Prof. Adriana Mitkova, PhD”, Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski Publishing House of the University of Sofia, 2023), which,

together with the dissertation, earn her the required 80 points, meeting the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" (PhD)

2. A brief biographical note

Demina Yulianova Ivancheva obtained a Bachelor's degree in Portuguese Philology from St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia in 2018, which she further pursued with a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics in 2019, also obtained from the same university.

3. Relevance of the dissertation topic

The dissertation is dedicated to semantic reconstruction, which is the weak link in etymology, and this is a strong argument in support of its relevance to contemporary linguistics. The semantic development of words denoting the emotion "anger" in Spanish and Portuguese has been traced based on written texts, using hypotheses about the origin of the words presented in etymological dictionaries as a starting point. A rich textual material has been investigated, which allows the attested semantic development of the examined words to be analysed. The conclusions drawn can be used to refine the proposed etymological hypotheses in dictionaries since the visible part of the semantic evolution of words is also a product of the previous, "invisible development"; it carries the memory and the motivating features of their etymons, their initial meanings, and initial internal form. From the very formulation of the dissertation's objectives, it can be seen that its aim is not to correct etymological hypotheses but only to indicate "some problematic etymologies and hypotheses related to the definite establishment of the origin of specific words." I will note that with the strength of the data on the history of words and the scientific toolkit of modern linguistic theories, which study language from the positions of anthropocentrism, the semantic aspect of etymological hypotheses can be highly specified. It is their weak point and is important not only with regard to the reconstructed initial meanings but also for determining the etymological nests, based on which the etymon is reconstructed, formally and semantically, and its time of birth is determined. Thus, indirectly, semantic reconstruction also affects formal reconstruction. In addition, aligning semantic reconstruction with the achievements of modern linguistics, realized in the paradigm of anthropocentrism, means reconstructing such meanings in etymology that are possible as a product of human cognitive and perceptual apparatus, not in the imagination of the etymologist. It is increasingly imperative to understand that not

everything is possible in semantic reconstruction, similar to formal reconstruction, which relies on phonetic laws.

4. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis

The thesis contains an introductory part, three chapters (two with a theoretical focus and one in which the historical-etymological analysis of the semantics of the studied vocabulary is presented), a summary part, a bibliography and a list of the sources used.

In the introduction the relevance of the topic is justified, the aims and objectives of the study are set. It is noted that the focus of attention is on controversial etymologies of Ibero-Romance names of anger, the semantic aspect of which can be refined on the basis of their attested history. Justifiably included in the assignment is the elucidation, from the positions of various sciences, of the nature of emotions as a phenomenon, and of anger in particular. In this way, the choice of the motivating features of the studied vocabulary and the specific features of its semantic development can be better understood. An important task is also the discovery of texts reflecting different periods of the development of the languages in which the studied names of anger are used. The attested use of the words is an important source for proving semantic changes over time.

Regarding the methods applied, it is noted that "the use of comparative-historical and etymological methods is combined with the study of lexical semantics in synchronic terms". The methods themselves and their interrelation are not defined. Since etymological research presupposes the formal and semantic reconstruction of the linguistic sign units under study (morphemes and lexemes), it is necessary to clearly define the methods and approaches by which this is feasible. The comparative-historical method is applied to the formal reconstruction of morphemes by applying the discovered phonetic laws. Semantic reconstruction methods are not commented on in this part of the thesis. Semantic parallels, which are traditionally used in etymological analysis, are also not noted as a methodological tool.

The first chapter entitled "Etymology – Definition, Purpose and Object of Study" is theoretical in nature and is expected to present the principles of etymological research. The chapter comments on formal reconstruction, semantic reconstruction and the role of word formation analysis in diachronic aspect. The exposition would benefit from a tighter, more structured presentation of the interrelationship of these aspects in etymological analysis, supported by the necessary scholarly literature, which is sorely lacking in this theoretical chapter. There is a need to illuminate such fundamental issues as the

determination of etymological nests, the formal and semantic reconstruction of word etymons, the diachronic identity of sign units, and the distinction of ancient homonyms. Special attention should be paid to semantic reconstruction, its role in etymological research, the achievements and unresolved issues concerning the semantic aspect of etymological research, as it is the focus of the dissertation. As noted, semantic reconstruction is the weakness of modern etymology. A thorough illumination of this issue presupposes the consideration of the motivating principles of words, of their different psychological meanings, of the role of semantic parallels, which prove that the relationship between certain meanings is possible, but do not testify conclusively to the direction of semantic development. The resources of the anthropocentric research approach, conforming the semantic side of lexical and morphemic evolution to the workings of the human perceptual and cognitive apparatus, and of the scientific toolkit of cognitive linguistics provide rich opportunities for enhancing the objectivity of semantic reconstruction and of etymological analysis in general.

Cognitive linguistics refines the toolkit for the study of semantic development, as it tailors it to the human as the bearer of language, focusing on the very mechanisms of semantic change, the conditions for their realization. Thus, semantic changes can be better understood by taking into account the mechanism of their realization (transfer by similarity or by adjacency), where they take place (in the mind of the speaker or of the listener), whether they are conscious or unconscious, and as a result of what cognitive processes they take place (cognitive metaphor, linguistic categorization). The scientific toolkit of cognitive linguistics allows to make an important step towards explaining the origin and semantic development of the studied lexemes. Thus, with regard to the lexemes studied in this dissertation, one could reach not only to Latin, where the main part of them are from, but also further back in time. The work would benefit if the facts about the history of the words, about their contemporary usage, together with appropriate scientific tools, were used for semantic reconstruction, for refining the etymological hypotheses presented in the dictionaries, which could not only be used as a reliable starting point for semantic development.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the semantic development of the examined lexemes. A wealth of material is drawn from texts with a wide temporal range. The history of the words is traced. The variation in the semantics of the studied diachronically identical lexemes in closely related Ibero-Romance languages is noted. The following patterns of semantic development of the lexemes denoting the emotion anger are outlined: madness

> anger; mockery, ridicule > anger; illness, sickness > malaise > anger; fast movement > anger, rage; bile > anger.

The patterns of semantic development discovered are valuable in view of the cataloguing of semantic transitions that began decades ago and continues today, which aims to support semantic reconstruction in etymological research with evidential typological material (Sperber, Hans. 1923. Einführung in die Bedeutungslehre, Bonn & Leipzig: Schroeder; Buck, Carl D. 1949. A dictionary of selected synonyms in the principal Indo-European languages. A contribution to the history of ideas. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; Schröpfer, Johannes. 1979. Wörterbuch der vergleichenden Bezeichnungslehre: Onomasiologie. Band I. Heidelberg: Winter; Wilkins, David P. 1996. Natural tendencies of semantic change and the search for cognates. In Mark Durie & Malcolm Ross (eds.), The comparative method reviewed. Regularity and irregularity in language change, 265–305. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press; Zalizniak, A. A., Ganenkov, B. M. D. G. I, and Maisak T, R. M. (2012). The catalogue of semantic shifts as a database for lexical semantic typology. *Linguistics* 50, 633–669. doi: 10.1515/ling-2012-0020; Carling, G. et al. 2023. The evolution of lexical semantics dynamics, directionality, and drift. *Front. Commun., Sec. Psychology of Language*. Vol. 8. doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1126249).

The proposed semantic development could also be interpreted in a cognitive perspective, and serve to approach the motivational features and the original internal form of the lexemes under study.

5. Synopsis

The synopsis is correctly prepared and reflects the structure, content and main results achieved in the thesis.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the critical remarks made, we can conclude that the dissertation contains scientifically applied results, which represent an original contribution to the science of linguistics and show that the doctoral candidate has the necessary knowledge and

professional skills in the scientific specialty "General and Comparative Linguistics – Indo-European Linguistics" for independent scientific research.

Due to the mentioned above, I give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented in the PhD thesis, and will vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree PhD to Demina Iliyanova Ivancheva in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1 Philology, doctoral program "General and Comparative Linguistics – Indo-European linguistics".



18.04.2024 r.

Member of the scientific jury:

(Prof. DSc. Zhivka Koleva-Zlateva)