STATEMENT
by Prof. Svetla Peneva Koeva, PhD,
Institute for Bulgarian Language "Prof. L. Andreychin" at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
of the dissertation for the awarding of educational and scientific degree of *Doctor* in the field of
higher education: 2. The Humanities, Professional area: 2.1. Philology (General and Comparative
Linguistics)

Author of the dissertation: **Ruslana Nikolova Margova**
Topic of the dissertation:**" Linguistic Features of Fake News"**

1. General overview of the procedure and all the materials submitted for reviewing

I have been appointed as a member of the scientific committee in relation to the procedure for
the defence of the dissertation "Linguistic Features of Fake News", written by Ruslana Nikolova
Margova at the Department of Bulgarian at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" of the educa-
tional and scientific degree of ***Doctor*** in the field of higher education: 2. The Humanities, Professional
area: 2.1. Philology (General and Comparative Linguistics).

The pack of materials Ruslana Margova has presented for assessment is in full compliance
with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the relevant
regulations and comprises the following documents: curriculum vitae; the text of the dissertation; an
abstract (summary) of the dissertation; a list of the applicant's publications relating to the topic of the
dissertation and copies of the publications; statement of authorship.

2. Short biodata

Ruslana Margova graduated from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1997. From 2001
to 2004, she earned extra qualifications in English language and literature as well as computa-
tional linguistics at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" She has worked as an international editor
and news editor in print and online media since 2004, as well as a freelance translator. The disserta-
tion work was discussed and directed for public defence by the Department of General, Indo-Euro-
pean and Balkan Linguistics at the Faculty of Slavic Philology of the Sofia University "St. Kliment
Ohridski".

3. Relevance and significance of the topic and adequacy of the aims and objectives

The topic of the study "Linguistic Features of Fake News" is very interesting and undeniably
significant. The study's goal is to "discover the linguistic characteristics of disinformation in the news
in the post-truth era, with Bulgarian as the language of study" (pp. 11 – 12). Tasks have also been
formulated to achieve the goal of the work, the most important of which are: collection of headlines
in Bulgarian from the news stream, which provide an opportunity for linguistic context analysis;
presentation of former studies in disinformation detection in different languages; identifying possible
linguistic markers of misinformation; analysing evidentiality, and more specifically the renarrative
and its homonymous forms as linguistic means for the credibility of media information.

4. Knowledge of the problem

Ruslana Margova is well-versed on the subject. The attached bibliography includes several ti-
tles of works in Bulgarian and foreign languages that are covered in the dissertation. The citations in
the text is correct, except that the names of foreign authors are not written in Cyrillic, that references
to the relevant page of the work being cited are not always made, and that the year is sometimes
absent.

5. Methodology of the research

The text draws attention to the fact that the phenomena considered in dissertation are analysed from journalistic, philosophical, and linguistic perspectives (p. 14). In our opinion, the interdisciplinary aspects simply accentuate the main subject matter, which is linguistic. As a result, we assume that the primary research approach is a contextual analysis of the examined language markers.

6. Description and evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation "Linguistic Features of Fake News" is divided into an introduction, ten chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The text has a unique structure (many chapters with various parts inside them); however, we do not believe that this unusualness should be criticised. A cluster approach is applied based on different topics for the systematisation of the concepts related to the topic of the dissertation. This enables the author to not only outline a wide range of concepts but also establish the systematic relations between them.

We recommend making an effort to find suitable Bulgarian terms rather than using the simplest way to transcribe the English terms, which is usually noted as an undesirable use in dictionaries for new words (if it is not a question of words which entered the language a long time ago, for example: (*постистина*) *post-truth*, or for words that have gained widespread use). Terminology also permits compound words for terms originating in another language, particularly if they are not extensively used. (*Мисинформация, малинформация, астротърфинг, кликбейт, газлайтинг, лъркърс, чурнализъм*) *misinformation, malinformation, astroturfing, clickbait, gaslighting, lurkers, churnalism*, and other words might thus be given proper terminological meanings in Bulgarian.

The review (presented in the sixth chapter) of the language markers for disinformation in the field of computational linguistics concludes with a summary of the main strategies that are used to detect untrustworthy news in Bulgarian (p. 106). Ruslana Margova finds that to a large extent the linguistic markers for disinformation in text analysis overlap with those used in computational linguistics. In general, the sixth chapter is useful; it provides a good overview of foreign and Bulgarian research in the fields of computational linguistics and text analysis, as well as a description of various language markers for detecting disinformation; however, it is presented unevenly, both in terms of content and graphically (which means that at least one more revision is required before the text can be published).

The investigation of renarrative and its homonymous forms as an indicator for possible disinformation is Ruslana Margova's main contribution. Some sections (retelling in Old Bulgarian, renarrative in Damascenes, development of children's speech) may be abridged and used in other publications since they are not directly relevant to the topics under examination. The description of evidentiality in foreign and Bulgarian linguistic studies is overly thorough in the context of the dissertation, but it demonstrates the author's awareness and ability to analyse and contrast research findings. The semantics of renarrative are examined through the lens of its application in various types of texts, with a concentration on journalistic works. The author backs up her argument that renarrative, like other identified linguistic markers, can be used to identify fake news.

7. Contributions of the dissertation to science

Ruslana Margova's dissertation, "Linguistic Features of Fake News", demonstrates her serious ability for scientific work, analysis, and generalisation, as well as her wide interests, which lead to the presentation of the examined subjects from several perspectives.

8. Assessment of the publications related to the topic of the dissertation

Ruslana Margova has four publications (two of them in print) and three co-authored publications (one in print). The publications cover a wide range of topics related to the author's research.

9. Personal participation of the applicant in the reviewed scientific works

The dissertation under review and its abstract are the result of an individual work and authorship.

10. Abstract of the dissertation
The abstract consists of 57 pages and fully reflects the content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, I give my positive assessment of the conducted scientific research, presented in the dissertation "Linguistic Features of Fake News", as well as for the achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree „Doctor" to Ruslana Nikolova Margova in the field of higher education: 2. The Humanities, Professional area: 2.1. Philology (General and Comparative Linguistics).

23 June 2023   Reviewer: Prof. Svetla Koeva, PhD