

REVIEW

by prof. Dr. Romyana Balinova Todorova,
Konstantin Preslavsky University in Shumen,
academic field 2.1. Philology
for awarding the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy”,
Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures,
for the needs of New Bulgarian University,
in the field of higher education Humanities,
academic field 2.1. Philology,
doctor habil’s programme General and Comparative Linguistics,
candidate: prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova, Department of Foreign
Languages and Cultures, NBU

1. Data analyzed in relation to the compliance of the application with the minimum and additional requirements for awarding the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy”

The candidate in the procedure, prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova, has submitted all documents required for awarding the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy” certifying the compliance of her application with the requirements of the Law about Scientific Degrees and Titles, as well as the Rules of Procedures of the New Bulgarian University. The submitted documents confirm the correctness of the aggregated indicators of the scientific data for the research, teaching and expert work of Diana Yankova, which correspond to the minimum national requirements under bl. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the ODARB, as well as to the additional requirements of the NBU.

2. Presentation of the candidate

As can be seen from the documentation presented for the procedure, prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova, has a rich academic and professional career, which can be defined as a process of a continuous educational and training development and upgrading beginning with her school education through the MA programme in the field of English and American Studies, and at a later stage in the field of cultural, sociological and sociolinguistic studies, and in more detail Canadian Studies, as well as a process of connecting her academic career with the practice of teaching in the mentioned fields to university students. The candidate’s professional development is due to her participation in various trainings, internships, study visits to foreign

universities of a different duration, thematic orientation, etc., as well as teaching different courses there.

Diana Yankova's academic career started back in 1983 when she graduated from Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski* in her MA degree in English Studies, specialization of comparative linguistics and second specialization of Bulgarian Language and Literature at the Department of British and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and New Philology.

Right after her graduation, from 1983 to 1987 Diana worked as a researcher at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, then from 1987 to 1999 she was a senior lecturer at the Institute for Foreign Languages in Sofia where she had intensive courses of English. From 1999 to 2007 Diana Yankova was a senior lecturer and director of a BA programme at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the New Bulgarian University. The title of her PhD thesis which she defended quite successfully in 2004 is *Bulgarian-English Legal Texts – Textual Patterns in Preparatory Qualifications* the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University in the field of general and comparative linguistics.

From 2007 to 2013 she was an associate professor (after a habilitation procedure with her book *The Text and Context of European Directives. Translation Issues in Approximating Legislation*), and a chair of the English Studies programme and since 2013 she has been a professor. In those years apart from having classes she has conducted consultancies with students, has been PhD students' academic advisor and has developed academic projects. Since 2028 she has been the head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures.

She has a great number of qualifications related to her teaching and academic activities pointed out in her CV, which speaks a lot about her preparation in the field of English, American and Canadian Studies, more specifically linguistics (English and Bulgarian), theory of translation, cultural studies, legal linguistics. Her publications are in the above mentioned fields. Part of her professional development is connected with creation of educational materials.

The fact that prof. Dr. Diana Yankova had quite a lot courses, some of which interdisciplinary, in the BA and MA programmes to students at NBU (15) and universities abroad is demonstrative enough about her knowledge and skills which she uses in her classes in an appropriate way. The disciplines she has had during the years are: practical English grammar, translation of culture-specific texts, translation of specialized texts, translation of general political texts, morphology, semantics and lexicology, text linguistics, Canadian cultural studies, internships and seminars in translation and interpreting, etc. It becomes obvious from the documents about her teaching experience that some of her courses are related to the topic of the current procedure.

Diana Yankova has also participated in a number of significant projects. Her participations in conferences with presentations all end with publications. Diana is a reviewer of a couple of national and international journals as well as of books and conferences, listed in her university profile.

Her documentation shows that there is sufficient proof of the fulfilment of the minimum and additional requirements for awarding the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy”. The candidate’s research, qualification and publication activities are really impressive with their wide academic basis integrating various linguistic theories, paradigms and models with practical application.

The candidate’s academic interests are in the field of general linguistics, cognitive and comparative

linguistics, text linguistics, morphology, semantics and lexicology, sociolinguistics, cultural studies, translation of various types of text, legal English and a lot more.

For the current procedure prof. Dr. Diana Yankova has presented a list of publications, which are enough for awarding the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy” to her according to the requirements of the procedure. Her publications are: on the topic of her dissertation – 14, a dissertation for the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy”; a dissertation for acquiring the academic and educational degree of “doctor of philosophy”, a published dissertation for the academic and educational degree of “doctor of philosophy”, after the professorship – 21 publications, out of which 6 in co-authorship and 7 publications, 3 of which in co-authorship in the table with the minimal requirements.

Diana Yankova has citations in Web of Science, in SCOPUS and in non-refereed publications with academic reviews: a total of 9 cited publications (monographs and articles), cited in 12 sources, pointed out in the respective reference, all of which with the allotted points as regards the indicators in item 112, para 2.

Her dissertation *Cultural diversity and cultural identity: sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first generation Bulgarian Immigrants to Canada* presented for the procedure is created by her personally and does not repeat in any way the topic and the content of the PhD thesis. It is a natural continuation of some of her previous studies pointed out in her documentation on various topics related to Canadian issues and to immigrants’ identity, and more specifically to issues oriented towards the first-hand Bulgarian immigrants living in Canada. It shows her knowledgeability when applying quite successfully some of the linguists’ viewpoints in her analysis as well as presenting her own interpretations as well as an analysis of the opinions of different respondents. The information is quite detailed and exhaustive as it

relies on the applicability of various language models and on her own ideas about the discussed issues, which speaks about her knowledge about the discussed issues and the used literature in depth. The thesis definitely makes an attempt to find answers to a number of questions presented in multi complex ways. It outlines the aims and the tasks of the study oriented towards the sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first-hand Bulgarian immigrants in Canada with their cultural diversity and cultural identity. It puts an emphasis on the language used by them with their specificities, ensuing from various peculiarities and reasons. The theoretical prerequisites from different researchers' references are quoted correctly and adequately. There is a rational theoretical model in the analysis of the concrete materials – fiction, non-fiction information and information from questionnaires' answers by different respondents, i.e. Bulgarian and overseas students from NBU.

The multicultural model is analysed in detail and its advantages as well as disadvantages stated by different researches on the respective topic are pointed out and commented upon. Comparisons are made with the models applied in other countries such as for example the Netherlands. What is pointed out is the fact that the impressions the people having decided to settle in a foreign country for various reasons get are mainly on the basis of the translated Canadian literature in Bulgaria and of the perceptions young people have of Canada. In this respect, an overview of the Canadian fiction as well as non-fiction sources since the beginning of the 20th century up to nowadays has been conducted. It turns out that there are practically no translations of some genres as for example Canadian poetry, drama and short stories as well as fiction written in French, which is an interesting conclusion. Comparisons of publishers' preferences and tendencies before 1990s and the present days are made. An attempt is made about clarifying the reasons for the choice of the analysed authors and books as well as about the correlation between the awarded fiction works, i.e. models of high culture, and the mass or low commercial culture ones. The conclusions related to the image of Canada in the Bulgarians' minds, more specifically, the readership, are made on the basis of promotions of books by Canadian authors, interviews with representatives from publishing houses and on the opinions of Bulgarian and overseas students from NBU expressed in questionnaires about Canada.

The chosen methodology is in unison with the aims and objectives of the thesis. The used methods and approaches are quantitative (semi-structured interviews and observations) and qualitative (questionnaires) as well as descriptive and analytical, in other words a complex approach is applied. Statistical data are also taken into account. Apart from desk research what is also used is field research. The data are compared on the basis of discourse analysis. I would rather say that what the study relies on is actually a critical discourse analysis. An extremely

important method in the investigation is observation which includes information from the social media and other online platforms. Every chapter, depending on the nature of the information, applies different methods and approaches for the confirmation of the previously stated presuppositions. However, this is inevitable as the multi functionality of a phenomenon is studied.

The dissertation contains summaries which are an original contribution in research as there are hardly any studies in this field and the investigation definitely fills a vacuum in this respect.

As for the clarification of the Canadian multiculturalism some acting laws such as the one about multiculturalism, the one about human rights, etc. are taken into consideration, which makes the investigation and the analyses even more reliable. Apart from that, what is taken into consideration are the social and the psychological factors which influence the language use in different contexts by first-hand immigrants as well as the ways in which these immigrants perceive the use of language and their identity in relation to the Canadian society.

The corpus for analysis consists of a representative sample of translations of Canadian fiction in Bulgarian, semi-structured interviews of Bulgarian and overseas students at NBU, as well of first-generation emigrants in Canada, different topics discussed in the Bulgarian Horizons Newspaper, etc. A historical overview of the translated literature through time since the 20th century has been made.

For me, personally, the research and the conclusions based on it related to the language code switching of the different parts of speech and the ways they are changed, as well as the degree of interference between the mother tongue and the accepted language is quite interesting. The mentioned reasons for this code change are of a different nature. The examples provided are quite surprising and unexpected in some cases.

The issues about the first-hand Bulgarian immigrants' national identity and their integration in the era of a global world based on factors such as age, education, reasons and duration of their stay in Canada are supported by definitions of diaspora, transnational identity, multiculturalism, etc.

The bibliography is quite exhaustive and contains some of the latest references in the respective field of study.

The Summary of the doctoral thesis presents the content in a concise and clear way. The author has pointed out the contributions of the dissertation in it as well.

As regards her other publications, I am acquainted with some of them as I have participated in conferences in which she has made presentations. Her investigations are always deep and are always supported by a rich evidential material. Diana has participated in a number of highly

specialized national and international conferences and symposia, forums in which a great number of high level specialists usually participate.

The candidate has 14 publications oriented to the issues discussed in the dissertation, some of which are independent while others are in co-authorship but the respective co-authors have signed a declaration stating that they agree for Diana to use part of the already published information.

This is just a part of the multisided studies of prof. Dr. Diana Yankova's but it is more than a sufficient proof for her interests and her research.

Diana Yankova's organizational and administrative activities are of a various nature, connected with the conducting of national and international conferences as well as of seminars.

She is the head of the Foreign Languages and Cultures Department. Up to 2013 she was the head of the programme board of English Studies in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. She is also a member of the Academic Council at NBU, member of the Faculty Council of the Bachelors' Faculty at NBU (2009-2016). She is the founder and first head of the Bulgarian Society of Canadian Studies (2004-2006). She was the vice president of the Central European Association of Canadian Studies (CEACS) from 2006 to 2012 and since 2018 up to the present. She was the president of the Central European Association of Canadian Studies (CEACS) (2012-2018 г.). Diana has been a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria since 2004. She is a member founder of the International Language and Law Association (ILLA). She is a member founder of the Bulgarian Society for British Studies (BSBS). She is a member founder of the Bulgarian Association for American Studies.

All these responsibilities are the result of the personal qualities of the candidate as she is a very active, initiative and efficient colleague who I know quite well and guarantee for all her engagements in an administrative, organizational and professional aspect.

3. Assessment of the applicant's quality of his scientific productivity and contributions

The documents presented by the candidate for the procedure on the scientific and applied contributions highlight the most important conceptual and applied aspects of the innovation of her scientific endeavours. What I would like to add is the fact that I appreciate highly prof. Yankova's investigations to explore in depth and adequately apply the existing theoretical prerequisites in the field of linguistics, comparative research, cognitive linguistics and to more specific grammatical phenomena in English and Bulgarian, which is undoubtedly a contribution to the more general linguistics as well as to its more concrete manifestations. The studied grammatical issues are also applied in the teaching of English.

The candidate's doctoral thesis' contributions are outlined in detail in her Summary of the dissertation. One of the major contributions is that such a multi aspectual study oriented towards issues about first-hand emigrants in Canada is conducted for the first time. It is based on a sociolinguistic and sociocultural analysis of Bulgarian emigrants in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver where Anglophones as well as Francophones live. The role of the Canadian immigration policy is presented and the image of Canada built in Bulgaria is analyzed. Special attention is paid to language codeswitching between English or French and Bulgarian, which is quite an interesting phenomenon. A conclusion is made that the Bulgarian diaspora is not fully integrated in the receiving country and community, which is actually an identical case all over the world. It is true that it is a fact everybody is aware of but in this case it is academically proven on the basis of documents and analyses.

The conclusions are also based on the theoretical conceptual model suggested by Safran (1991) about the diasporas being scattered emigrant minority communities who are doing their best to preserve the memory, the myth and the opinion about the country they have come from, which is contested to a certain extent. Undoubtedly, Bulgarians cannot acquire the feeling of a full identity to the accepting country, which is the reason of talking about a hybrid identity.

The review of the scientific production and academic work of Dr. Yankova's gives me strong reasons to declare that her candidacy fully meets the requirements for the academic degree of "habilitated doctor of philosophy".

4. Remarks

What is mentioned is that the translated books in the National Library in Sofia are from the period 1878-2018, and at the same time somewhere else in the thesis is mentioned that an overview of the translated literature since the 20th century has been made.

In my opinion, chapters 8 (Appendix) and 9 (References) should appear without numbering, although it is the author's right to organize the information in the thesis as she finds appropriate. They cannot be called chapters after all.

There are some grammatical mistakes in the Summary.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account both the quantitative scientific minimum requirements for awarding the academic degree of "habilitated doctor of philosophy", as well as the qualitative analysis of prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova's scientific production, work and contributions, as well as her personal features and skills, I strongly support her candidacy in this procedure and give my

positive assessment about her scientific and applied achievements, as her academic and professional orientation in the field of philological sciences fulfils the requirements of the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and its accompanying regulations. I recommend to the Academic Selection Committee to vote positively for awarding **the academic degree of “habilitated doctor of philosophy” to prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova in the area of higher education: 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, doctor habil’s programme General and Comparative Linguistics for the needs of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, New Bulgarian University.**

June 1st 2023

Signature:


(prof. Romyana Todorova, PhD)