

## Review

by Prof. Dr. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", professor 2.1. Philology (General Linguistics - Cognitive Linguistics and Word Formation - (English)) for the acquisition of the scientific degree "doctor" in the professional field: 2.1. Philology and Information Sciences, "General and Comparative Linguistics", with a candidate Zlatina Georgieva Nikolova

The PhD dissertation entitled *Foreign ergonyms and pragmatonyms in the urban onomastic space* explores a problem of potential importance in the fields of semiotics (semiotics of the city and semiotics of names), onomastics, linguistic anthropology and studies of the linguistic urban landscape (Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis 1997) and urban multilingualism (Alastair Pennycook and Emi Otsuji. 2015).

The theoretical and applied contributions of the dissertation can be used by advertising agencies, companies, etc. to study the environment and determine strategies for creating memorable names; it can be of use a to city governments for policies of aesthetic layout of the linguistic urban environment.

According to the doctoral student herself, "[t]he practical significance of the work will consist in the possibility of applying the obtained results in the practice of teaching university disciplines such as general linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, of special courses on onomastics, or in the practice of teaching languages, as well as to develop naming recommendations' (p. 11 of the dissertation). I am deeply convinced that the obtained results cannot be applied in the practice of teaching the university disciplines of general linguistics, psycholinguistics and foreign languages. Neither the object, nor the methods, or the data of the study are directly related to the specified disciplines. Rather, they would be useful in teaching the semiotics of urban environments, in the training of marketing specialists, of advertising specialists, of ethnographers, business managers and onomasticians. Although the dissertation is a significant achievement in the field of linguistic landscape research, the work shows superficial linguistic analysis and lack of solid theoretical background in linguistics. I find the weakest aspects of the dissertation precisely in the linguistic analyzes of ergo- and pragmatonyms, which I comment further in the review.

The object, the immediate research area, aims and methods of the study are described accurately and informatively, although quite briefly. Among the objectives of the dissertation are

a description of the main linguistic methods and strategies used to create ergonyms and pragmatonyms, an assessment of how these methods affect the recognition, recall and acceptance of names by users, and establishing the preferences and perception of these names by the population of the urban area.

Additionally, the following steps to achieve the goals are defined, “an analysis of the effectiveness of different naming approaches from a marketing perspective and how they affect competitiveness, an analysis of the frequency of use of foreign or adapted, local words in the naming of brands, organizations and products, and a study of the impact of globalization on linguistic preferences in naming” (pp. 7-8 of the dissertation). I can responsibly state that I do not see anywhere in the dissertation a study of the interdependence, let alone correlation, of the recognition, degree of recall and acceptance of names by users and the main linguistic methods and strategies used to create ergonyms and pragmatonyms. The only indicator that can suggest such information is the use of loanwords, adapted or not, transliterated or not. The questionnaires used in the study of attitudes do not address this problem and do not contain data on the basis of which conclusions can be drawn about such dependencies (if). The remaining objectives have been achieved.

Given these goals, the two main methods, the descriptive method and the sociolinguistic attitude research method (not linguistic interviewing, as identified by the doctoral student), are adequately selected and their application leads to conclusions that guarantee the achievement of the set goals. The descriptions of the typical methods in onomastics are self-serving, superficial, and the reason for the specific choice of methods by the doctoral student remains unclear.

The dissertation unequivocally demonstrates that Zlatina Nikolova possesses wide knowledge of the state of the art in landscape linguistics research, which is evidenced by the extensive discussion of the definitions of ergo- and pragmatonyms, from the arguments in support of the choice of working definitions in the dissertation and even in the choice of the research area itself. The literature used is in complete harmony with the researched issues and serves as a corrective for the conclusions and analyzes that the doctoral student makes. In addition to the adequacy of the selection, the accurate citation of the authors referred to in the text also makes a good impression. The relevant literature is introduced with a critically

informed precision and shows Zlatina Nikolova's own position regarding the definitions of the studied concepts.

I could not comment on the adoption or elaboration of a theoretical model in the study beyond the definition of concepts and the use of terms in the analysis of the models and strategies for creating the studied semiotic units, as such does not stand out in the dissertation. This in itself is not a problem given the main objectives of the dissertation. The research is extremely well contextualized (especially in terms of understanding sociolinguistic trends and multicultural influence) and clearly shows the multi-layered nature of the studied phenomena. The emphasis is rather on the relationship between the linguistic and multicultural features of the urban environment and its inhabitants, linguistic diversity, globalization and the social and economic consequences it causes, as well as the cultural transformations it leads to, rather than purely linguistic analyses.

The empirical data on which the analysis is based were collected using the cartographic application Google maps for the regional cities of Sofia, Varna and Burgas. They present a colorful picture of a relatively homogenous urban environment in terms of basic characteristics, and in this sense are comparable to the extent that it does not matter from which city the analyzed onym is (although this is quite fertile ground for comparative studies).

Names of organizations from various fields, such as pharmacies, bookstores, educational centers, shops, restaurants, pastry shops, travel agencies, beauty and health salons, etc., were analyzed. 21% of the names are in Bulgarian, and 79% are in a foreign language. The PhD student identified several distinct methods of formation of the types of onyms studied and focused mostly on those formed by the borrowing method, with the aim of studying the degree of perception and understanding of the names formed from loans, as well as preferences by users. Specific sources of linguistic data are signs, graffiti, advertising signs, street names and other verbal forms of communication since the multimodal aspect of the linguistic urban landscape remains completely out of sight of the author of the dissertation, although ergonyms and pragmatonyms are seen as socio-cultural markers that reflect social changes, power relations and processes of identity and belonging.

The weakest part of the entire thesis is the structural-semantic classification of ergonyms and pragmatonyms. Zlatina Nikolova singles out six main groups: morphological, lexico-semantic, lexico-syntactic, phonetic, specific, and complex models. Apparently, this

classification is based on a preliminary analysis, but it is not clear what language parameters are used and in what language paradigm the work is cast.

I will mention only the most disturbing and contradictory statements and examples of this classification, which shows a rather superficial and, in places, erroneous linguistic analysis (pp. 68 – 94 of the dissertation). Proper analysis is lacking in favor of long lists of examples, not all of which actually belong to the class in which the PhD student has included them.

In a random order, I will mention only some of the problem areas, asking the doctoral student to answer the questions raised therein.

1. No differentiation is drawn between affixation in word-formation and grammatical affixation. The type of meaning is fundamentally different in the two types. For illustration, although both names are given as examples of affixation, - *Килимарника* different from the *Стария бряст* in that the former involves conceptual reprofiling based on derivational suffixes (two successive ones at that), while the latter only has the grammatical marker of the indefinite article (which is also present in the first example).
2. There is no *-екс* suffix in the Bulgarian language and in English (if that is the idea). On what basis is it claimed that *-екс* “creates associations with expertise or specialization, e.g., *Тавекс*” (p. 69)? Based on psycholinguistic research? Based on a field study in which language users defined the meaning
3. What is the difference between abbreviations and abbreviated words?
4. Pages 71-73 of the dissertation are extremely troubling as under the claim of analyzing examples of metaphorical and metonymic onymization we read “*Heavenly Food* implies flavors and culinary pleasure by creating an association with something divine and exceptional. *Sunny Market* evokes a feeling of light and abundance, making the place attractive and pleasant to shop. The ergonym *Angel Face* suggests care and beauty, promising customers a high-quality result. *Golden Sweets* beckons with the promise of sweet delights, conjuring up an image of something precious and delicious through the metaphor of gold. *Metal Heaven* suggests a place where metal fans can find everything related to their favorite musical style.” It is frivolous for a researcher in the field of general and comparative linguistics to explain metaphoricity by “creates the image of, suggests an idea, etc. similar”. Not to mention that the same

examples are in the class of “simple semantic onymization that directly designates the object of the nomination, *Beauty room*” (p. 71), “while metonymic onymization allows to convey information about the nature of the named object. For example: *Beauty Room* (beauty salon), *Beauty Express* (beauty salon), *Вкусните Къщички* (restaurant)” (p. 72).

5. I don't understand on what basis *Вкусните Къщички* is a metonymic onymization, and *Golden Sweets* is a metaphorical one. Please, explain the principles of distinguishing metonymic, metaphorical and simple onymization, which, due to the lack of definitions and analyses, and in view of examples being wrongly classified or appearing in several categories, remain hidden even for the thorough reader.
6. How is *Metal Heaven* an example of metaphorical onymization? Thousands of research publications on composition explain how meaning arises in these compounds.
7. Metaphor is explained as comparison, and it has been known since Aristotle that comparison and metaphor are not identical conceptual strategies and linguistic realizations of these thought processes. I ask the PhD student to define the terms metaphor and simile as she has used them in her work.
8. I do not understand how a loaded name like *Сандвичок* (which has an associative connection with novichok and a whole socio-political drama, as well as a diminutive in Slavic languages introduced by the diminutive suffix) is an example of simple onymization. I would like the PhD student to explain what the criteria are for recognizing simple onymization and how a noun with a diminutive suffix appears here and not in the list of affixation examples.
9. It is rather frivolous and irresponsible for a doctor of General and Comparative Linguistics to use the following descriptive expressions instead of the necessary terms: “Word-formation which combines two or more words or their roots is a popular method” (p. 91). This describes three different processes of word formation – blending, compounding and compound clipping. I would like the doctoral student to explain these processes and to motivate her choice of the quoted, non-terminological and non-analytical descriptive expression. Could the doctoral student clarify which of these processes are involved?

10. “Translations and word meanings also produce interesting results, as with *More laser center* (sea and море) and *Manjera* (манджера from the Italian verb manjare)” (p. 92). I ask the doctoral student to explain how this is about translation. What is translated? From which into which language? What is transliteration for the PhD student (which is exactly what this example is about, more precisely, interlingual homonymy as a result of transliterating a text with a Latin graphemic representation).
11. *Ко Шу Ям* (What I'll Eat) - a mix of dialectic, linguistic stereotyping (how a language sounds) and real purposeful wordplay, with grapheme transliteration thrown in again to imitate the phonetic transcription of an expression so that the Cyrillic expression sounds Japanese-like.
12. The same applies to “Stylization in the formation of ergonyms and pragmatonyms consists in the use of patterns and elements from other categories *Рибарникъ, Фурнь, Трень, Погачатъ, Часовникъ, Гостилницъ Йорк, Тиганъ и Рибатъ*” (p. 97). What and which are these categories? Again, it is a matter of manipulating grapheme-phoneme correspondences and toying with diachronic orthographic rules (although the application of the invalid rule is rightly noted as an attempt to archaize and invoke associations with traditional values and patriotism). The grammatical rule for marking masculine nouns with the full article is reflected as a spelling rule in the old normative way by recreating a reduction in the pronunciation of the full article.
13. How is “*Мегастор*” an example of word formation and borrowing? Again, it is about transliteration.
14. I ask the doctoral student to explain how blends and abbreviations are united under the umbrella of “word play”.

The same examples are used in different classes. This calls into question the classification criteria. A much clearer and linguistically justified classification of the methods of creation of the studied onyms is needed, which does not lead to overlap and identifies clear criteria of manipulation of linguistic constructions and their components.

Against the background of these problems with the analysis, I do not accept the statement of the doctoral student that “a detailed analysis of the processes of formation of ergonyms and pragmatonyms” was carried out. I also disagree with the PhD student's conclusion

that her research revealed “the most popular trends in the formation of the names of commercial organizations, enterprises, establishments, trademarks”, both universal and specific. Such a generalization cannot be made on the basis of data from three cities in one territory, compared with similar studies again in a Slavic language, again a fusional-inflectional one, which may lead to typological but not universal trends. Moreover, for a similar purpose, it is necessary to correctly identify the linguistic nature of these tendencies.

All other conclusions of the doctoral student correctly reflect what was achieved in the dissertation.

The summary corresponds to the structure and content of the dissertation.

The legally required number of publications have been presented to the committee members. All of them are in Bulgarian scientific publications of a general nature, mostly conference proceedings. There are no publications in specialized scientific journals. I do not have data on the citations of the PhD student’s publications.

I have no grounds to suspect plagiarism or the use of artificial intelligence in the preparation of the dissertation.

In my opinion, the contributions of the dissertation can be summarized in:

- 1) Data were collected on names of organizations, trademarks and institutions (ergonyms and pragmatonyms) in the urban linguistic space of large regional cities. This data is a rich source for in-depth analysis.
- 2) Data are provided on the significant influence of foreign languages, especially English, on the formation of ergonyms and pragmatonyms.
- 3) Data were collected on the perception trends and preferences of Bulgarian speakers regarding ergonyms and pragmatonyms.

Based on everything outlined above and given the fact that this is the first comprehensive study of such a volume for the PhD student, I give a positive assessment of the work of Zlatina Georgieva Nikolova and propose to the honorable committee to award Zlatina Georgieva Nikolova the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in professional field: 2.1. Philology and Information Sciences, “General and Comparative Linguistics”.

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Signature

