

## **REVIEW**

by

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. ANTONIA IVANOVA PENCHEVA,**

University of National and World Economy, Scientific Field 2.1. Philology

on the doctoral dissertation of

**ZLATINA GEORGIEVA NIKOLOVA,**

a self-prepared doctoral candidate, dismissed with the right to defend,

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” in the professional field

2.1. Philology

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irina Georgieva

Title of the Dissertation:

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE ERGONYMS AND PRAGMATONYMS IN URBAN  
ONOMASTIC SPACE**

### **1. Significance of the Research Problem in Scientific and Applied Contexts**

The sociolinguistic functioning of proper names related to trade and services in urban onomastic space has been a relatively recent focus in linguistics. Recently, the study of ergonyms and pragmatonyms has become a growing field within onomastics. In Bulgaria, contributions to onomastic research have been made by N. Kovachev, Y. Zaimov, D. Mihaylova, Y. T. Balkanski, K. Tsankov, and Y. Zaharieva. Scholars such as P. Mihaylov, S. Koeva, Ts. Dimitrova, R. Demirkova, and G. Bakardzhieva have shown scientific interest in the functioning of ergonyms in Bulgarian linguistics. Within this research context, Zlatina Nikolova's dissertation fits well. The significance of the research topic in scientific and applied contexts is undeniable, as the number of scientific works dedicated to this topic is relatively small and does not address the problem in its entirety. Identifying the impact of globalization on linguistic preferences in naming commercial entities reveals how these spaces shape social interactions and cultural identity.

## **2. General Characteristics of the Presented Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of 164 pages, including an introduction, exposition, conclusion, two appendices, and a list of references. Out of the total 164 pages, 145 pages constitute the main text. The exposition includes 10 figures. The dissertation is structured into four main chapters, each examining different aspects of the formation of urban onomastic space. Structurally, the text adheres to established standards for doctoral research.

The dissertation clearly and precisely formulates the object, goals, and tasks of the research. The candidate focuses on ergonyms and pragmatonyms in urban linguistic space, their formation methods, perception, and degree of understanding by users, as well as their influence on daily communication and cultural identity in urban environments. Specifically, the research scope covers foreign-language names from various industries (pharmacies, bookstores, educational centers, shops, restaurants, confectioneries, travel agencies, beauty and health salons, etc.) in specific regional Bulgarian cities (Sofia, Varna, Burgas).

The main goal is to analyze the formation methods of ergonyms and pragmatonyms in the context of urban onomastic space and to investigate the preferences and perception of these names by the population (p. 7).

To achieve this goal, the candidate formulates six research tasks, including:

- Identifying trends in naming commercial organizations, brands, and enterprises;
- Identifying universal and specific naming strategies across different industries;
- Examining linguistic changes in urban linguistic space;
- Investigating the perception of ergonyms and pragmatonyms by consumers;
- Analyzing the influence of linguistic knowledge and cultural factors on understanding names; and
- Exploring the need to improve cultural and linguistic literacy for better communication (pp. 7–9).

The candidate implements these tasks through sociolinguistic research, data collection, subsequent analysis, and drawing conclusions and recommendations.

The methodology chosen by the candidate corresponds to the set goal and identified tasks. The methods of complex linguistic description, including observation, comparison,

classification, systematization of ergonym and pragmatonym formation methods, quantitative calculations, and summarization, as well as linguistic interviewing to determine the pragmatic potential of names and their usage variants in daily speech, have been successfully applied.

The author shows good familiarity with the scientific literature on the research problem and the ability to use and cite sources appropriately. A total of 114 literary sources in Bulgarian, Russian, and English have been examined.

The presented work is original, representing an independent study on the chosen topic, based on empirical material of approximately 480 names.

The dissertation follows a “classic” structure for such research. The first chapter sets out the theoretical framework, reflecting methodological approaches to defining urban onomastic space. The author exposes her knowledge of nearly all theoretical literary sources on the chosen issue, summarized appropriately. The second chapter discusses the insufficiently established terminological scope of the terms ergonym and pragmatonym and notes the existence of terminological synonymy in the works of scholars from different countries. Specifically, the candidate focuses on the volume and content of the terms ergonym and pragmatonym as understood by various researchers, describing their distinctive characteristics and functions. The third chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the collected ergonyms and pragmatonyms from the linguistic space of major regional cities. The detailed and classified methods of forming ergonyms and pragmatonyms, accompanied by rich empirical material, including visual elements, are positively evaluated. The most productive formation methods identified are lexico-semantic, compound word formation, and foreign borrowings. The author notes that ergonyms contribute to creating original, easy-to-use, and memorable names that become an integral part of daily urban speech (pp. 99–100). The fourth chapter analyzes the results of linguistic interviews, examining the pragmatic potential of ergonyms and pragmatonyms in attracting attention to brands, sparking consumer interest, and prompting purchases. Ergonyms and pragmatonyms become a psychological mechanism of interaction between producers and consumers. The study shows that the majority of names in the urban space of major regional cities are formed through borrowings, while consumers prefer names in their native language, which facilitates usage and understanding. The author deserves admiration for placing her conclusions from the survey in a broader context, verifying them with studies of urban linguistic landscapes in several countries—Spain (Barcelona), Russia (St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk), and

Japan. The conclusion contains findings on the specifics of urban linguistic landscape functioning, the nature and structure of ergonyms and pragmatonyms, as well as contributions.

### **3. Evaluation of Scientific and Applied Contributions**

The presented dissertation is the result of careful and in-depth research on the issues of urban linguistic landscapes. The topic has not been the subject of an independent monographic study in Bulgaria, which determines the scientific novelty of the research. The discussed issues are relevant and of significant importance for both the development of linguistic science and practical applications - such as marketing and advertising in the provision of goods and services.

The main contributions of the dissertation include:

1. Analyzing the processes of forming ergonyms and pragmatonyms based on rich empirical material and revealing the main trends in their formation;
2. Identifying current trends and emerging practices in naming organizations, brands, and institutions; and
3. Providing important applied recommendations for the effective use of ergonyms and pragmatonyms, tailored to Bulgaria's cultural and linguistic specifics. These would be useful for practical applications by businesses and institutions.

I would like to draw attention to one section of the fourth chapter, titled “On the Translation of Ergonyms and Pragmatonyms”. In it, the candidate discusses the challenges of translating ergonyms into other languages, as one of their main linguistic characteristics is expressing cultural identity. Although not included in the research tasks, the author highlights this problem, emphasizing that these challenges require a careful approach and deep knowledge of cultural contexts to achieve adequate and accurate translation (p. 140).

All contributions are clearly highlighted in the dissertation and realistically reflect the candidate's main achievements in the overall research. They are listed and systematized in the dissertation's abstract.

#### **4. Evaluation of Publications Related to the Dissertation**

The candidate has presented three publications related to the dissertation. Two of the publications have been published in:

- Zlatina Nikolova. *Functions of Ergonyms and Pragmatonyms in Urban Onomastic Space*. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference "Bulgarian Studies Worldwide. Philology at Home." University Publishing House "Neofit Rilski," Blagoevgrad, pp. 112–121. ISBN 978-954-00-0353-5.
- Zlatina Nikolova. *Pragmatonyms in Urban Onomastic Space. Cross-Cultural Communication*. Interdepartmental Collection of Articles. ASKONI-PUBLISHING, Sofia, 2023, pp. 154–163. ISBN 978-954-383-150-0.

The third paper,

- Zlatina Nikolova. *Distinctive Characteristics and Formation Methods of Ergonyms in Urban Linguistic Landscapes*,

was presented at the International Conference “Languages, Cultures, Communications”, held on June 8, 2023, at Veliko Tarnovo University “St. Cyril and St. Methodius”. Following a request, a note was provided confirming its approval for publication in the journal *Studia Philologica Universitatis Tarnovenssis* (annual series), Volume 43.

All three publications reflect the research topic and individual aspects of the dissertation, showcasing the author's creative explorations.

#### **5. Evaluation of the Abstract**

The abstract of the dissertation is 41 pages long and, although it does not follow the exact structure of the dissertation itself, it meets the quantitative and qualitative requirements for the volume and content of abstracts. The information presented is concise, clear, and accurate, accompanied by figures summarizing the statistically processed results of the analysis.

## **6. Notes and Recommendations**

I have no significant substantive criticisms of the presented dissertation. I would recommend that the candidate should continue her research in the field of problems related to translating texts containing ergonyms or pragmatonyms based on real examples.

## **7. Conclusion**

The dissertation titled *Foreign Language Ergonyms and Pragmatonyms in Urban Onomastic Space* by Zlatina Georgieva Nikolova represents an original scientific study on current issues in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. The research is a valuable contribution to the development of onomastics in Bulgaria. The work meets the requirements set forth in the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations and deserves a positive evaluation.

Based on my overall impression of the qualities and merits of the work, I confidently propose that the scientific jury should award Zlatina Georgieva Nikolova the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” in the professional field 2.1. Philology.

February 14, 2025

Sofia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Antonia Pencheva