

## REVIEW

of the publications and dissertation of Zlatina Gueorguieva Nikolova for obtaining a PhD degree in professional field 2.1 Philology at the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, New Bulgarian University

**Reviewer:** Prof. Diana Yankova, D.Litt., Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, NBU, Sofia

Dissertation Topic: **Foreign Language Ergonyms and Pragmatonyms in the Urban Onomastic Space**

### **Brief information about the PhD student**

Zlatina Nikolova obtained a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Spanish Philology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2005 and a Master's degree in "Management and Human Resources" in 2021 from "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University, Burgas. She has also completed postgraduate qualification courses at UNWE (International Economic Relations), Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski (Japanese Language and Culture), Confucius Institute (Chinese Language), as well as a Sanskrit course at Sofia University. In 2000 she received the internationally recognized TEFL Certificate. In 2023 she enrolled as a PhD student in the PhD programme "General and Comparative Linguistics", professional field 2.1. Philology at the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, NBU.

She started work in 2004 as a freelance lecturer and translator, then as a manager, coordinator of teaching activities and tutor in English, Spanish, Japanese and Bulgarian for foreigners, and since 2021 she has been an assistant professor of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University in Burgas, teaching general and specialized medical and technical English.

### **Significance of the research topic in scientific and applied terms**

The dissertation investigates different aspects of ergonyms and pragmatonyms in an urban environment: how they are created, how they are perceived, how they are understood by users. The study is significant for linguistics because it reveals the dynamic interaction between languages, cross-cultural and multicultural influence and provides evidence of sociocultural identity as expressed in the choice of one or another ergonym or pragmatonym. The topic is relevant not only from a linguistic point of view - but is also particularly important for the spheres of advertising, economics, marketing,

and business. The results of the research have practical applicability in the teaching of various linguistic and other disciplines in higher education institutions and confirm the necessity of in-depth research in this area, as well as a clear definition and unification of terminology.

### **Justification of the aims and objectives of the thesis**

The aim of the study is to identify, describe and analyze the main strategies in the formation of ergonyms and pragmatonyms as well as their perception. In order to achieve this goal, Z. Nikolova puts forth six specific tasks, which include the identification of trends in the naming of commercial organizations and brands, the study of linguistic dynamics in the urban linguistic environment, the differentiation of naming strategies, the analysis of the perception of ergonyms and pragmatonyms, the influence of the command of a language and ethnocultural factors on the perception of names, and the analysis of the need to increase proficiency in the language and acquire knowledge of the relevant culture. The main aim of the study as well as the specific tasks are well justified from a research point of view.

### **Correspondence between the chosen research methodology and the set aims and objectives of the dissertation**

The methodology for the realization of the research objectives consists of two stages. The first one is the method of linguistic description, which includes the finding of ergonyms and pragmatonyms, and the observation, comparison, classification and synthesis of the results. The next stage is conducting a survey in relation to the perception and interpretation of the research material by the users.

The corpus of the study includes 480 names (21% in Bulgarian and 79% in foreign languages) found in three cities: Sofia, Varna and Burgas. There were 150 respondents of different ages who took part in the second stage of the study, but most were in the age group between 35 and 50.

In short, both the methodology and the research methods meet the objectives of the study.

### **Assessment of the publications on the dissertation: number, nature of the journals in which they have been published.**

The PhD student presents 3 articles on the topic of the dissertation, „Функции на ергонимите и прагматонимите в градското ономастично пространство“ (2023),

„Отличителни характеристики и методи на образуване на ергонимите в градския лингвистичен пейзаж“ (2023) и „Прагматонимите в градското ономастично пространство“ (2023). The first two are incorporated into the dissertation almost verbatim, so I will not comment on them. The third article is devoted to an overview of the different definitions of the term pragmonym (pragmatonym) in Russian and Bulgarian linguistics and the difference between the two schools.

Zlatina Nikolova has also participated in two scientific conferences with papers on the topic of her dissertation.

### **Citations by other authors, reviews in the academic press, etc.**

No reference to citations of Zlatina Nikolova's works by other authors has been provided.

### **Recommendations and critical comments**

I would like to offer some comments that could be useful in the publication of this dissertation, as well as in future research. There is an imbalance between the different parts of the dissertation. The theoretical part is quite long compared to the analysis, which starts in Chapter Three (but actually only on page 68) and ends on page 150.

It is not clear what relevance some theoretical postulates have to do with the research. E.g. why is a certain definition discussed or why is an author cited - how is it related to the thesis? There is no clear theoretical justification.

The conclusions and contributions are rather fuzzy: they need specification and logical ordering. E.g. the text on pp. 145-147 does not consist of specific conclusions but general statements that have no place in this section.

It would be useful in future research to include a question on respondents' proficiency in foreign languages in their profile to see if a difference would arise in their perception of ergonyms and pragmatonyms. The chapter "On the Translation of Ergonyms and Pragmatonyms" could be the beginning of a future, in-depth study.

The explanation for the spelling and pronunciation of the ergonym *Me gusto* (p. 120) can be justified by the fact that it is associated with the use of the slang 'gusto' in Bulgarian. Also try and avoid unnecessary foreign borrowings when a corresponding Slavic word exists, e.g. 'именуване' or 'назоваване' instead of 'нейминг' could be used.

In-text citations should be standardized and unified - sometimes authors are cited with their initials, sometimes only with their last name. There are also typographical and technical errors, which are easily corrected through a thorough reading of the text.

**Conclusion with a clearly formulated positive or negative evaluation of the dissertation**

All critical remarks and recommendations are intended to contribute to the shaping of a better text and analysis, and in no way diminish the tremendous work of the doctoral student. My overall assessment of Zlatina Nikolova's dissertation, abstract and publications is positive. The dissertation contains both theoretical and applied contributions. The structure and content of the submitted dissertation and abstract fully comply with the requirements of the relevant national legislation and its implementing regulations at NBU. This gives me grounds to recommend that Zlatina Nikolova be awarded the PhD degree in Philology.

January 19, 2025

Signed: